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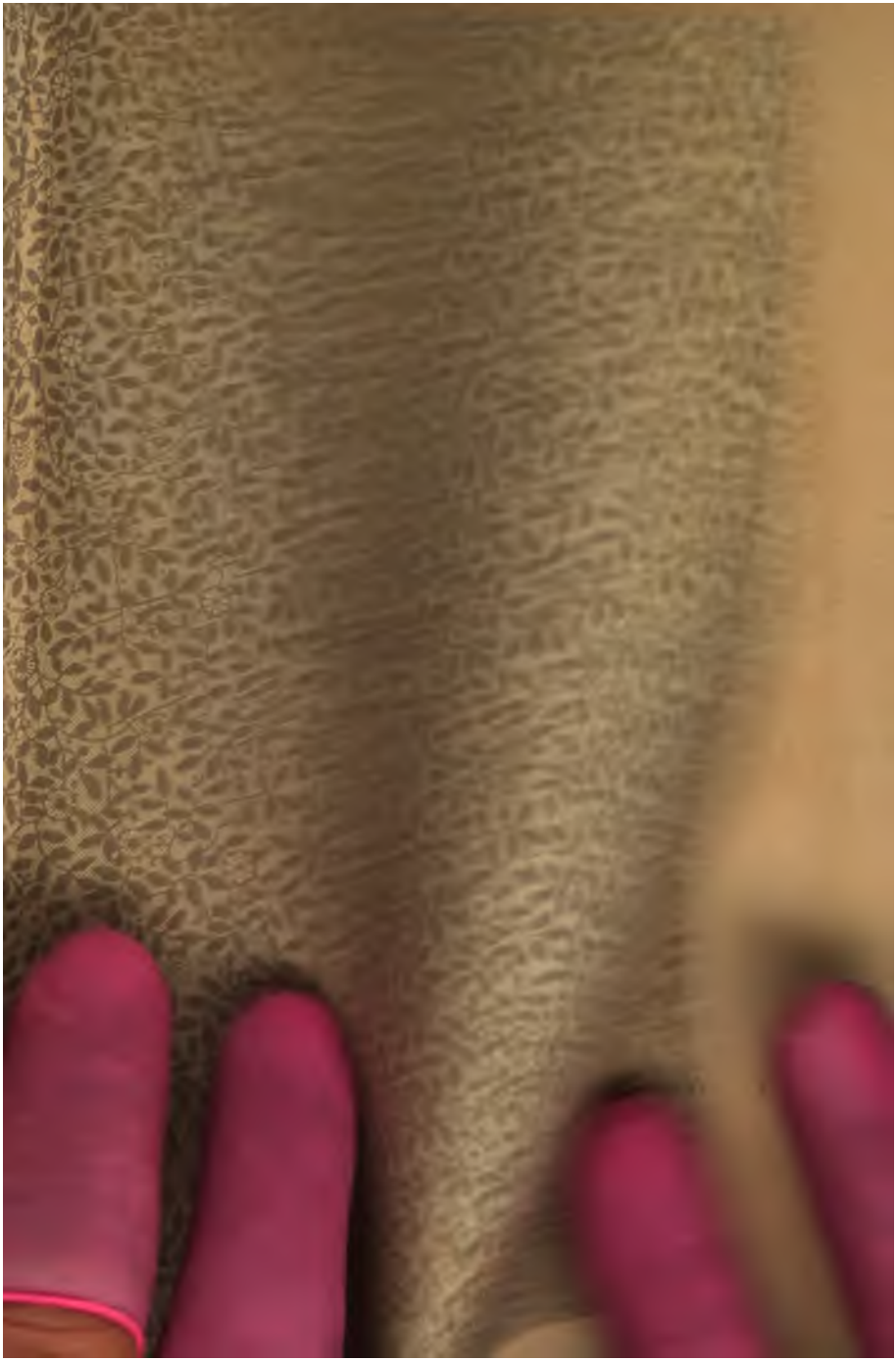

The Children's Bread.

SHORT SERMONS TO CHILDREN.

BY THE

REV. H. J. WILMOT-BUXTON, M.A.,

VICAR OF S. GILES-IN-THE-WOOD, NORTH DEVON, AUTHOR OF "MISSION SERMONS FOR A YEAR," "THE LORD'S SONG," "THE LIFE WORTH LIVING," ETC

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The Children's Bread.

SERMON I.

THE WAITING-ROOM.

(Advent.)

1 Cor. i. 7.

"Waiting."

Once, when I was holding a Mission in the North Country, we had a service in a waiting-room at a railway-station. You must know, children, that I have held services in many strange places; in a coal-mine, far away from the light of day; on board ship; on board a coal-hulk on the Thames, where the captain lived in the middle of the river, with his wife, and a family of birds and rabbits; once I preached on the top of a heap of cinders; sometimes I have held a service among the great red furnaces of an iron-works, or

among the wheels of a cotton-mill, or in a big stable, where hundreds of horses were kept. But the strangest place of all for a service was, perhaps, the waiting-room. I could not help thinking how this world of ours, in which we live, is like a waiting-room. It is full of people of all kinds and classes, all waiting. Most of you children have travelled by train, and have seen the waiting-room at a station. What different kinds of people you find there! There is an old man, with bent back, and white hair, *he* won't make many more journeys. And there is a little child, with laughing eyes, he has a long way to travel yet. There sits a poor widow, with tears on her face, there is a very sad, dark journey before her. There is a soldier with a clanking sword, and a sailor with a brown cheek, and a Clergyman, all doing the same thing—old age, childhood, sorrowful and glad people, men of war and men of peace, all *waiting*. They are waiting to go on a journey, or waiting for some one to come to them. So in this world, little children, there are all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children, some merry, some sad, some prosperous, some unfortunate, all waiting to go on a journey, or for some one to come to them. Do you know for whom we are all waiting, here in the waiting-room of the world? We are waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ! And that coming, or Advent, of which we are specially thinking

at this season, will be sudden and unexpected, will it not? Jesus tells us, that he will come as a thief in the night, and that no man, not even the angels, knows the day of His Coming Well, supposing a dear friend of yours promised to come and see you, and stay with you; and supposing he told you that his visit would be quite uncertain, that he might come any day, what would you do? Surely you would prepare for him, and make his room ready, so that he might not take you unawares. Jesus Christ has promised to come again, suddenly and unexpectedly. O my children, see that His room be ready for Him. See that your hearts be swept and garnished, and all the cobwebs and dust of sin swept away; so that whenever the Lord comes, you may be able to say—

"O come to my heart, Lord Jesus,
There is room in my heart for Thee."

And whilst we are waiting we must not be idle. When the Lord comes, He expects to find His people *watching*, and busy about their work, preparing for Him. I have heard of a little boy who once said to his mother, "I wish I had lived when Jesus was on the earth, that I might have done something for Him." And his mother answered, "What could a little boy like you have done for Jesus?" The child thought for a moment, and then said, "I would have run everywhere doing his errands." Now whilst you are waiting for

His Coming, you can all go about on errands for Jesus. When you see a schoolmate in trouble, crying, perhaps, and miserable; and when, instead of laughing at him, you go and say a kind word to him, and make him forget his sorrow, then you are doing an errand for Jesus. When you went to see the sick child who lives in your street, and offered to sit and read to her, you were going on an errand for Jesus. When you saw some cruel boys throwing stones at the frogs in the village pond, and when you stopped their cruel sport, you were doing an errand for Jesus, for He Himself says, "In that ye have done it unto the least of these, ye have done it unto me." Every child, as well as every man and woman, has an errand to do for Jesus.

And now I want you to think of something else. We have talked about the waiting-room at the railway-station, let us think about the railway itself. You have all seen the trains running upon it, and most of you have travelled on it yourselves. Well, I like to get a sermon out of everything, and I believe this railway can give us a sermon. You know that the trains have a certain line of rails to run upon, and if they get off the line all is confusion, and misery, and death. Now you and I have a line to travel on through life, that is, the line of *duty*, which is laid down for us by God Himself. If we get off that line, if we neglect our duty, or do what we know to be wrong, we are sure

to cause harm and misery to ourselves and to others. The lines of different railways go through very different kinds of country. Some lie through flat, dull, uninteresting places : others among high mountains, and over great rivers. Some lines of railway pass through bright meadows and pretty stations, where the flowers grow ; others are all black and ugly with the smoke and factory chimneys. Children, our lives are like those different railroads. Some of us lead a dull life, others a busy, anxious life in a great city. Some few have many pleasures, those are the flowers growing beside the line. But, remember, wherever the railway may go, the rails are the same. So whether our way of life is bright or dark, we must try to *keep on the line*, the line of duty. I suppose you all know that there are certain parts of the railway called Points, where a train can be turned from one line to another ? These Points have to be most carefully watched and attended to, for if a train is turned on to the wrong line there is sure to be a disaster. For instance, a number of passengers travelling on the *up* line might be turned on to the *down* line, and presently there would be a terrible crash, and the road would be strewed with killed and wounded people. Think now, are there not many such points in your lives, turning-points, where two ways meet ? One such turning-point is when a child first goes to school. Instead of home life, and a father's wise

words, and a mother's teaching, there is the little world of school, with plenty of good in it, and plenty of bad. Then you will have to choose for yourselves, you can choose your companions and your own course. O, my children, be careful, mind the Points, get on the right line of duty, and ask God to keep you there. Don't let bad example turn you on to the wrong line of disobedience, and idleness, and disgrace. For us all there are two lines, two roads. Hear what God says of them in the Bible: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." That's the *wrong* way. Again, "The path of the just is as the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." That's the *right* way, the path of duty.

Some of you are soon going to be confirmed. *That is another turning point.* Then strength will be given you from on high, the Holy Ghost will be given you to help you to keep on the line of duty. That line of duty will bring you to the Altar of the Blessed Sacrament, when Jesus comes to you as the Children's Bread. Be very careful about that turning point. Bad companions will be sure to laugh at you, and try to turn you on to the wrong line. They will try to keep you back from Confirmation, they will try to frighten you away from the Altar. Be on your guard, pray more earnestly for help, and *keep straight on.*

Some of you elder boys and girls are going out to service, or have done so already. *There is another turning-point.* You will be more free than you have been, you won't have your parents or your teachers close at hand to advise you. You will meet with many temptations which you did not know before. Take care to start on the right line, carrying with you as luggage, first, *Prayer*, then God's *Word*, to be a light unto your path, and then, as you travel on, be sure to look out for the signals. On a railway the only way to travel safely is to show the proper signals, and to obey them. There are three of which we must specially think. One signal means *caution*, another means *danger*, another *all right.* Sometimes when a train is coming to a sharp curve in the line, the engine driver sees a signal, which means, "Caution—go slowly." The driver can't see what is on the other side of the curve, so he is warned to proceed with caution. Now, my children, our way of life is full of curves, and we cannot see what is beyond. Every day is a sharp curve, for we cannot see what is on the other side of it, what to-morrow will be like. Whenever you go into a new place, or among new people, there's a sharp curve in the line, you don't know what awaits you. What does the signal tell you? "*Caution, go slowly.*"

There is another signal, which is a red flag, and that always means one thing—"Danger, stop!" I will tell

you how a little child once saved a train by showing the danger signal. A train was travelling, on a certain line in America, through a wild and mountainous country, and as it came round one of the curves, of which I told you, the driver saw a little boy ahead of him, waving his hat, and holding up his arms as a danger signal. The train was stopped within a few feet of a mass of rock which had fallen on the line, and which would have thrown carriages, passengers and all, over a precipice. There are many times in our lives when we need to look out for the danger signal. When you get into bad company, when you boys fall in with those who swear, or tell bad stories, or waste their time at the tavern, then look out for the danger signal, and remember what it means—*Stop!*

When you girls are tempted by others to disobey your mother, to run about with those who mean you no good, or to spend your wages on useless finery, then look for the danger signal, it says, "Stop, or you'll be ruined." Do you ask who will show you these signals? I answer God will. God will speak to you by the voice of conscience, telling you when you are in danger, warning you when you are going wrong. Whenever you have an uncomfortable feeling that all is not right with you, that you are not quite happy, that is God showing you a signal, saying, "take heed to your ways," bidding you stop on the path of danger. When you

read your Bible, you will see many signals shown to you. The services of the Church and the lessons of your teachers are all signals for your guidance. Don't neglect them, dear children, for to neglect a danger signal means ruin. Try also to show the signal to each other. If you see a companion going in the wrong way, try to show him the danger signals. Every Christian child should try to help his fellows on to Heaven. Sometimes we read in the newspapers how some wicked person has placed a bar or stone or some other obstruction on the railway, with the hope of wrecking the train. If this obstruction is discovered in time the red flag is shown, and the train is stopped. There are many such dangers in our journey. Satan puts different obstacles in our way, trying to throw us off the line of duty. Temptations, bad thoughts, the example of wicked children, are all stumbling blocks put in your way. Take good heed then to the red signal, and help to warn others also. I read once of a poor madman in an Asylum, who was always repeating the same words—"Oh! if I only had!" He had been a signalman at a railway bridge, which opened over a river. When the bridge was swung open, it was his duty to show the danger signal, and stop any train which was approaching. One night he forgot to show the red signal, the bridge was open, and a train full of people was hurled into the river. The shock drove

the poor man out of his senses, and he always said the same sad words. If we neglect to look for the signal which God shows to us, or if we fail to warn others, we may be forced to think and say for ever—"Oh! if I only had!"

But it is time for us to think of the end of the journey. All journeys, short or long, end at last, and if you are God's children, you know where your journey will terminate, with Jesus in Paradise. I once saw a train come in full of happy schoolboys, going home for the holidays. There were friends and relations waiting on the platform to welcome home the children, but one boy had no friend to meet him, and he was crying bitterly at being thus forgotten. Dear little children, if you go on life's journey "looking unto Jesus," He will meet you at the journey's end, and will take you to that home where, among the many mansions, the children are not forgotten, and in whose streets there is no complaining, and the little feet are never weary.

SERMON II.

THE BEST BOOK.

(Advent.)

PSALM CXIX. 72.

"The law of my mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

THAT is what David said about God's Word. David had not so big a Bible as we have, he had only part of the Old Testament, and none of the New. Yet he valued it above thousands of gold and silver. I wonder if you would say what David said. Some of you think that you would like to ave thousands of gold and silver. You fancy money will do everything. Well, money will do a great deal, but it won't do everything. There are a great many things which money can buy, but there are some things which money cannot buy

and which we can only get from God's Word. Money will buy you a house and lands, but it won't buy you happiness. There have been many who have lived in grand houses, and worn soft clothing, and yet have never been happy, and have been afraid to die. Now God's Book will teach you how to be happy, and it will show you how you may have a home eternal in the Heavens, without money and without price. It is only the children of the rich who have lands and houses to inherit, but God's word tells everyone of you, no matter how poor you are, that you have an estate to come into, a property to hold. In Baptism you were made children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. No money can buy those blessings for you.

Once upon a time, a powerful king built a very beautiful city, with glittering palaces, and noble streets, and high towers, and gardens full of fruit and flowers. When the city was finished, the king invited all his subjects to enter in. When they came to the city, they found that the gates were so low and narrow that they could not pass them. One was hindered by his fine clothes, which quite filled up the narrow gateway. Another carried so much luggage that he could not pass through ; and one lifted his head so high, that he could not get it under the lowly entrance. But whilst all the great men and women were thus kept

outside the city, the little children ran in quite easily. At last they asked a wise old man what they must do, and he told them that they must become as little children before they could enter the city. Some of the great ones were very angry at this, and went away in a rage. But others, who were wiser, cast away their useless burdens and ornaments, and bent down to the ground, and so entered through the gates into the city. God's Book tells us that it is the humble who shall be exalted, and that unless we become as little children, meek, trusting Jesus, we shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. Two little children were once talking together about Heaven, and the little girl said to the brother, "I know the way to Heaven." "Do you indeed! Then tell me the way," said the boy. And the little sister answered him, "You must begin to go up, and keep on going up, and you will get there, but you must be sure not to turn back." Do you remember, children, what God's Word says about the road to Heaven: "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way." And can you tell me how we can walk in that narrow way which leads to Heaven? Jesus says, "I am the *Way*, the Truth, and the Light, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." So you see the Bible tell us about our home in heaven, and how to get there, surely that's better than thousands of gold and silver? I told you that money would buy you a grand house,

but could not make you happy. Well, God's Word will teach you how to make your home, whether it be small or great, rich or poor, a *happy home.* The best home to live in is one where God dwells, and gives "the peace of God which passeth all understanding;" a home where people pray, where they speak gently one to another, where they love one another; God's Word will teach you how to make your home like this, and that is better than thousands of gold and silver.

Again, money will bring you all kinds of comforts and luxuries, but it can't give you health, or make you good. Delicate food is of no use to us if we have not got the appetite to enjoy it. Fine clothes are worthless to a poor cripple who must lie in bed. But what money cannot do, God's Word can; it will teach you how to bear sickness, or any other trouble: it will teach you how to say, "Thy will be done." And I said, money can't make you good. A little boy was once asked what holiness meant; and he answered, "It means being *clean inside.*" No money can make you clean inside. God's word will show you that "the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin," and it will teach you to pray like this: "Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."

Money will bring us many friends and acquaintances, but not of the best kind. I remember when I was at School, if my friends sent me a hamper of good things,

or some money, I found I had many more friends just then than I had before. But when the money was spent, and the hamper was empty, I soon missed my new friends. The kind of friendship which money buys is not worth having. But God's Word will tell you about a Friend who is always true and faithful. You all know who that Friend is? "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." I want you, my children, to learn to love your Bible, and to value it, and respect it. Sometimes I have seen leaves torn out of God's Book, and thrown into the road. It always grieves me to see this, for it shows that people don't respect their Bible. Of course the leaves of that Book are only paper and print, like those of any other work, but the Words are the Words of God, and we ought to reverence them. Try to make a friend of your Bible. Do not look at it as a lesson Book, but as a treasury full of precious gems, as a gallery full of wonderful pictures, as a garden of flowers planted by God's Hand. I have heard of a poor blind girl who had one of the Gospels given to her printed in raised letters. She used to read with the ends of her fingers, as blind people do. By and by, with constant use, the tips of her fingers grew hard, and she could not tell the letters by her touch. The poor girl cut the skin from the ends of her fingers, but that only made matters worse. So finding she could not read her beloved Book any more, she

said "Good bye" to it, and pressed it to her lips. To her surprise, she found that her lips, more delicate than her fingers, could feel the shape of the letters, and her love was rewarded, for she could read her Bible once more. Have you ever seen a pretty toy called a Kaleidoscope. When you hold it to your eye, and turn it round, you see a number of pieces of coloured glass, which form all kinds of beautiful patterns, such as stars, and crowns, and fountains, and flowers. Now I think the Bible is very like a Kaleidoscope. When you look carefully into it, the more you turn over its pages and study them, the more beautiful things you find there; and remember that all these beautiful things will show you something about Jesus. Whether you are reading the Old Testament or the New, whether you study the Law or the Prophets, or read about the Judges, or the Kings, you will find something about Jesus. He said "Search the Scriptures, for they are they which testify of Me." Whenever you read your Bible, always do so with one object, always read *looking for Jesus Christ.* And you who are growing up into big boys and girls, take care how you neglect your Bible when you go out into the world.

There was once a sailor boy who had a good mother, one who taught him to pray, and to read God's Word. When he came home from a voyage he found that his mother was dead, and when he went to sea again he

fell among bad companions, and in time quite neglected his prayers and his Bible. One day there was to be a grand merry-making on board his ship, and the young sailor went to his chest to take out his holiday clothes. As he tumbled the things out of his chest, he saw a Book which had long lain neglected at the very bottom of the box. The boy took it up, and a folded paper dropped from between the pages. He opened the paper, and saw a lock of grey hair, and written underneath, in his sister's hand, "this is our mother's hair, her dying prayer was that you might love God's Word." Then the sailor boy remembered with shame that he never had opened his Bible, and scarcely said a prayer since his mother died. He seemed to see his dear mother looking at him reproachfully, and he knelt down beside his sea chest, and prayed for pardon, and strength to amend.

My children, make much of your Bible, and you will find that David was quite right when he said, "the law of Thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver."

SERMON III.

A CHRISTMAS INVITATION.

(Christmas.)

S. MATTHEW XI. 28.

"Come unto Me."

WHAT shall I speak to you about, my children, on this glad Christmas Day? I will speak about a Christmas invitation. This is the time when families meet together at home, and ask their friends to join them; and often the children are allowed to invite their school-fellows and playmates to their houses. Perhaps some of you have had an invitation of this sort. But I am going to tell you of another invitation; everyone of you has been invited by the Holy Child Jesus, the Son of God, to go somewhere to-day. Can you guess where? To

Bethlehem. Yes, to Bethlehem. What does that name mean? The House of Bread. Do you know why it was so called? Because of the many cornfields which were round about it. Yes, that was one reason, and there is another reason why the House of Bread was a good name for it. Jesus Christ, who was born there, calls Himself the Bread of Life. Well, to-day we have an invitation from the Lord Jesus to go even unto Bethlehem. He says, "Come to me." He bids us come to Him at different times and different places. At Christmas and Epiphany He bids us come to Him as a little child at Bethlehem. In Lent He calls us to Him in the wilderness, and tells us to fast, and to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. On Good Friday He calls us to Calvary, and bids us take up our Cross, and follow Him. Where does Jesus invite us on Easter Day? To a garden, and to a grave, where the stone is rolled away, and He tells us that because He is risen from the dead, we shall rise also. Then on Ascension Day He invites us to a mountain to see Him go up to Heaven; and He is always asking us to turn our thoughts and wishes upwards to that Heaven, and so that one day He may invite us to come to Him there, and "to be ever with the Lord." Well, to-day we must think of the child Christ's invitation to you children to go to Bethlehem. We cannot of course travel to-day to that stable among

the wild hills. Yet in one sense we *can* go there. I left the home, where I lived as a child, many years ago. The place is all changed now, yet I often go there. I go there in *memory*, I picture all the days when I lived there as a boy. We can take our thoughts and feelings to a place, although we cannot take our bodies. Let us in heart and mind go "even unto Bethlehem." What are we going there for? To worship the Lord Jesus Christ. But He is a king is He not, King of kings, and Lord of lords? Is it easy to get into a king's presence? No indeed, if you wished to visit the Queen you would find it very difficult, almost impossible. Those who are allowed to see the Queen have to obey certain rules, and to wear a particular dress, and the gates and doors of her palace are carefully closed and guarded. But there will be nothing to stop us from coming to Jesus except what we make ourselves. We can shut *ourselves* out, no one else will. If you get into a passion, that bad temper will be a door between you and Jesus. If you act cruelly and spitefully to another child, that makes a door between you and Jesus. Then you must be properly dressed. The court dress at the Queen's Palace is a very grand affair, and costs more money than most of us can afford. The dress which you must wear if you go to Jesus, will not cost any money. What is it called? Is it pride? No, that's far too gaudy and showy a dress; people who wear

that are thinking more about their clothes than about Jesus. The dress you must wear must be very clean, and simple, and unassuming, and it is called *humility*.

And then I think you ought to take some present to Jesus. Everyone gives presents at Christmas time. Jesus has given you presents, life, and health, and parents, and brothers, and sisters, and a beautiful world; and He promises you something more, a bright and glorious home in Heaven, and "such good things as pass man's understanding." Won't you take a present to Jesus? Do you know what He values most—your *love*. The best Christmas present to the Holy Child Jesus is a little child's love. And remember, dear children, you must *show* your love, not merely talk about it. Show it by trying to be good children, by watching over your words and tempers. Show it by being kind and gentle to others—to your parents, your teachers, your school-mates. When you show love to one another you show love to Jesus. Show it by doing something for His Church, and His poor. When you gather a bunch of flowers to place on the Altar, that's a loving gift to Jesus. When you give up some of your playtime to visit a sick friend, that's a loving gift to Jesus. Every time you sing a hymn, *meaning* what you sing, you offer a loving gift of praise to Jesus. Every time you deny yourself, and instead of spending your money in toys and sweet-

meats you give it to the poor and needy, that's a loving gift to Jesus. When you bear any wrong or injury patiently, you are making a very loving present to Jesus. I wonder if you ever heard how a brave girl bore insult for Jesus' sake? She was one of the little Sisters of the Poor, who go about begging for money and broken food and cast-off clothes for the very needy. One day she asked help from one who was rich, and by position at least a gentleman. He had a dislike to sisterhoods, and after roughly refusing to give, at last he even struck the sister. She only said, very gently, "That was for myself, now won't you give me something for my poor?" And the man was so ashamed of himself that he gave a liberal present.

And now, my children, I want you all to ask the Lord Jesus to take you by the hand, and lead you. Do you remember a chapter in Isaiah which tells us that a time shall come when the fierce beasts shall be tame and gentle, and "a little child shall lead them?" In one sense that prophecy has been fulfilled. The little Child who was born on Christmas Day has changed the history of the world. Before Christ came the world was full of fierce and cruel nations, more savage than the wild beasts. Satan ruled over the heathen, making them bloodthirsty and violent, teaching the strong to trample on the weak, leading the powerful to make slaves of the feeble. Jesus came, and brought the

light of truth into the world, and it was changed. Fierce men became gentle, proud men became humble, a little child was leading them. There are plenty of cruel and proud people among us now, but it is because they won't let Jesus lead them. I saw a little child once walking with his father; he was but a tiny little creature, and as he tried to run alone he fell. Then his Father lifted him up, and said so lovingly, "Take hold of Father's hand." That is what we all ought to do, children and grown people, we can't walk alone through this world, we must take hold of God's Hand. When you are tempted to do wrong, to get into a passion perhaps, or strike a playfellow, then whisper this little prayer, "Jesus, take me by the hand, make me gentle." I have heard of two children, brother and sister, who loved each other very dearly. The boy, who was the elder of the two, fell ill, and died. When he was laid out on his bed, his mother took the little girl to see her brother. As she stood looking at his sweet face, white and cold as marble, she said, "Mother, may I take hold of his hand?" Then lifting the dead white hand, and stroking it gently, the sister said, "This little hand never struck me."

If you would keep your hands from sinning, ask Jesus to take you by the hand, and lead you. You know He has promised to be always with you. Long before the first Christmas Day the prophet Isaiah fore-

told that a Child should be born, and He was to have a special name, can you tell me what it was? Emmanuel, that is, *God with us.* Remember that you can never hide from Jesus. If you love Him, and ask Him to lead you, He will take you by the hand. If you sin against Him, break His laws, and take His Name in vain, He is still Emmanuel; you can't shut God out of your work, or your play. He knows all that you do, and say, and think. To Him "all hearts are open, all desires known, and from Him no secrets are hid." Jesus is with you in school-time, and He knows how you use your time, and the talents which God has given you. Jesus is with you when you go out to work in the fields, or the shop, and He knows if you are honest and industrious, and He hears all the bad words: remember that when you are tempted to speak them. Jesus is with you always, even unto the end of the world, and He will always be your friend if you will have Him. He calls to us to-day, as it were, from the poor manger, and says, "Come unto Me, learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." He calls to you older children, who have been confirmed. He speaks to you from the Holy Altar, where the Children's Bread is given in the Blessed Bethlehem of the Church, and He gives His Christmas invitation, "Come unto Me."

And the day will come, my children, when we shall no more keep Christmastide on earth, nor listen to the

joy bells ringing in the tower. We shall not need to go in memory to Bethlehem of Judea, for we shall look on the better Bethlehem above, where Jesus, the Bread of Heaven, the Children's Bread, shall feed us till we want no more, in that "dear, dear country," where the children shall be "safe in the Arms of Jesus."

SERMON IV.

THE POWER OF THE DOG.

(Lent.)

PSALM XXII. 20.

"Deliver . . . my darling from the power of the dog."

THE Bible does not generally speak well of dogs. The word dog in the Scriptures often means a wicked person. It has that meaning in my text. David is speaking in this twenty-second Psalm as a prophet, and he foretells the sufferings of our Saviour. When he says, "Deliver my darling from the power of the dog," it is a prayer that God would deliver His only Son from the hands of wicked men. In Eastern countries dogs are reckoned as unclean animals, and there if you want to give a man a bad name you call

him a dog. But there are good dogs and bad dogs, dogs to be trusted, and dogs to be avoided. Let us think about the good dogs first. Most of you have read the beautiful story of the hound Gelert. You will remember that Gelert's master left him one day, in his hut in the forest, to take care of a little child sleeping in his cradle. When the man came home from hunting, he found the hut in confusion. The furniture thrown about, the cradle upset, the child gone, and the hound lying on the floor with marks of fresh blood upon his mouth and paws. There were also stains of blood about the room. Then the poor father thought that the dog must have killed and devoured the baby, and he took his hunting spear, and stuck it through the dog's body. The hound looked at him with sad reproachful eyes, then shivered, and died. When his master came to look about the hut, he found the dead body of a wolf lying in a corner, and in another corner was the child, safe and sleeping. Thus the hunter knew too late that Gelert had been faithful, and it was the wolf's blood and his own with which he was stained. That, my children, was a good dog.

Then there was another good dog in France. One day, when he and his master were travelling through the forest of Bondy, some men set upon his master, and killed him, and buried his body out in the forest. The dog went to the town where he lived, and found

out the friends of his dead master, and tried to make them follow him. At first they took little notice of him, but the dog took hold of one by his coat, and tried to pull him along. Then they followed him to the forest, and the dog showed them where the master's body was buried, and afterwards helped to discover the murderers. That was another good dog. Perhaps some of you have read Scott's beautiful story of *The Talisman*, in which he tells us about Roswal, the noble deer-hound of the Scottish Knight, who kept guard over the English Standard, and afterwards discovered who had insulted it? That was another good dog. Then there are the dogs of St. Bernard, of which you have all heard. They go out among the snow and ice on the bleak mountain, and find the travellers who are lost in the snow, that the monks of St. Bernard may give them shelter in the monastery. And there are the blind men's dogs, which you see about the streets, leading their masters carefully along, and holding a basket or a tin mug in their mouth, that people may drop their money in.

These are all good dogs, but there are some bad dogs, of whom we must beware, and I am going to talk to you about them. What ought we specially to think about in Lent? About our Lord's Fasting and Temptation. Yes, but there is something more for us to think of, our own sins and temptations, and how to

conquer them. That is what I mean when I tell you there are several bad dogs of which we must beware. Let us think of some of their names.

First of all there is a dog called *Sulky*. Can you tell me what colour he is? Black. Yes, very black indeed. I remember, when I was a little boy, my dear mother used to tell me not to let the black dog get on my shoulder, that is, not to be sulky. When a child is bitten by that black dog, his face becomes quite changed. It grows dark, and heavy, and ugly. No matter how good-looking a child may be, directly the dog *Sulky* bites him all his beauty is gone. And the child's character is altered too. He becomes stubborn, obstinate, he won't do his work, and he won't play. He does not look you honestly in the face as he once did, he turns his eyes down to the ground. And the child's speech is altered too. He does not answer civilly and frankly as he used to do. The sound of his voice is quite different, and he keeps muttering to himself such words as, "I shan't—I don't care." No one can be happy with a sulky person, and no one is more unhappy than the sulky one himself. Oh! my children, beware of that black dog, don't let him bite you.

Then there is another dog called *Passion*. Do you know what colour that dog is? Red. Yes, a very

fiery red dog, with gleaming, cruel eyes, and foaming mouth. If he bites you, he sends you mad for a time. The old Romans were quite right when they called anger a short madness. If you see a child with a very red face, kicking and stamping and screaming, you may be sure that the fierce dog Passion has bitten him.

It is a sad sight, children, one of the saddest of all sights, to see anyone in a passion. Can you tell me what the word *Passion* means? When we speak of our dear Saviour's Passion, we don't mean anger, do we? No, we mean His suffering. Well, when you get angry you suffer yourself, and you make others suffer, so your furious anger is called passion. Yes, people in a passion suffer whilst the fit lasts, and suffer still more after it is gone, for it is sure to leave some bad consequences. Men have killed their dearest friends in a moment of passion. You have heard, I dare say, of Alexander the Great, who sat down and cried because there was only one world for him to conquer. In a famous battle Alexander's life was saved by his friend, Clitus, and how do you think he was rewarded? One day Alexander was in a furious passion, and he snatched a spear out of the hands of a soldier, and killed the first person whom he met, and that person was his friend Clitus. When the king saw his friend lying dead on the ground, all his anger was gone, but that would not bring Clitus back to life. Then Alexander tried to kill

himself, and when he was prevented, he lay upon his bed weeping and groaning. I don't think, my children, there was anything very *great* about him there. There was another conqueror, of whom you have heard, and he was wiser. Julius Cæsar, when he was provoked, used to say over all the letters of the Roman Alphabet before he gave an answer. Beware then of that fierce dog Passion. Remember what Solomon, the wise man says about anger, I wonder if you could tell me the text? "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

There is another dog of which you must beware. He is called *Idle*. You never see this dog doing anything useful. You never find him carrying a basket or a bundle, as some good dogs will. You never see him keeping guard over his master's goods, or minding the sheep, or drawing a sledge, like the clever dogs at the North Pole. He lies in the sun sleeping, almost too lazy to get up and eat his food. Perhaps you think this dog *Idle* does not do any harm. But what *good* does he do? People who never do any good are sure to do some harm. Take care, children, not to be bitten by dog *Idle*. As soon as he bites a child, the boy or girl becomes heavy and slow. Instead of getting up in the morning fresh and bright, with plenty of time to say his prayers, and start for school after breakfast,

the child bitten by dog *Idle* gets up late, and so begins the day badly. Then his prayers are hurried over, or left unsaid. The child is almost sure to be late at school, or late at his work. In school he is sleepy, or inattentive, and you know where to look for him, at the bottom of the class. If he has a sum to do, he wants someone to do it for him. If he has a lesson to prepare, his eyes are always wandering from his book, and he tries to make others as idle as himself. When he goes to Church he often falls asleep, and when he has work to do you never see him put *two hands* to it. The only thing he cares for is play, and very often he is too idle even for that. Do you remember the old story of the idle boy who went out one summer morning to find a playfellow? First he met a horse, and asked him to come and play with him. But the horse told him that he must go and carry his master on a journey. Next the boy saw a dog, and he invited him to be his playmate; but the dog answered that he must go and drive the sheep to the pasture. So the idle boy went on, wondering why everyone had some work to do. Presently he saw a bee flying along and humming as he went. The child begged him to come and play with him, but the bee would scarcely spare time to tell him that he was busy making honey for the winter. He watched the tiny ants, and saw they were all working. He tried to make a bird his playfellow, but it was

busy feeding its little ones, and last of all the child rested by a babbling stream, and asked, "Will you come and play with me?" The stream led him along for many a mile, and showed him the work which it had to do. At one place it bathed the dark green watercress, and at another it nourished the blue forget-me-not. Sometimes it turned a mill wheel, and ground the corn. Sometimes it sent little side streams to water a meadow, and by and by it joined a great river, and helped to carry ships out to the wide sea. Then the little boy came home very sadly, having learnt that there is no place for idle people in God's great world. Dear children, beware of Dog *Idle*. Do whatever you have to do *heartily*. Do you remember a text about that? "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Whether you are learning, or working, or praying, do it heartily. God only helps those who help themselves.

The old Greek fable says, that once a wagoner was driving a loaded wagon along a muddy lane, and the wheels stuck fast. Then the man prayed the strong Hercules to come and help him. But Hercules told him to put his shoulder to the wheel, if he wanted help. Remember that we must help ourselves. We must, as the Spanish proverb puts it—

"Pray to God devoutly,
Hammer away stoutly."

There is another dog called *Mischief*, which is very dangerous. You must not think that I am speaking of *Fun* and *Merriment*, they are good dogs, which skip and play about, and do good, not harm. But *Mischief* is sly and secret, he goes about in dark places, and is never safe to meddle with. When a child is bitten by dog *Mischief* no one can tell what harm he may do.

I know a man who is blind of one eye. A few years ago he could see very well, but one day, as he passed through the town, a little boy shot a stone out of a catapult, and cut the man's eye out. That child had been bitten by dog *Mischief*, and you see what came of it. Two children got into a farm-yard, among the hay ricks. One showed the other a box of matches. At first they only looked at them, then they struck a match, then another. Presently one child held a lighted match to a hay rick, and in a minute it was on fire. The wind blew the sparks about, and by and by not only the hay-ricks were burning but half the village as well. All because the children were bitten by that dog *Mischief*. Sometimes a whole train full of passengers is thrown off the line by a stone placed by a child on the rails. Often persons have been thrown from their horses, and killed, because a mischievous child has purposely frightened the horse. Beware of dog *Mischief*. Think, before you do any mischievous

act, what the consequences may be, what harm and misery you may cause to innocent people.

There is another dog of which you must beware. His name is *Careless*. He is not so bad as some dogs, at times we can scarcely help liking him, and yet he does much harm. When a child is bitten by dog *Careless* things go badly with him. Perhaps, in school, the child is writing a copy, suddenly he lets a great drop of ink fall on his copy-book, and there is a blot. Or perhaps the child is working a sum, he knows perfectly well how to do it, and he takes up his slate to the master, expecting to be praised. The sum is quite correctly worked, but the answer is wrong, the child has left out a figure. A child, after he has been bitten by dog *Careless*, says his prayers without thinking what they mean, and reads the Bible without understanding it. When he says his Collect in Sunday School, he leaves out the chief sentence, and makes a beautiful prayer sound like nonsense. Be on your guard against dog *Careless*.

There are many other dogs of which I could warn you, but I will only speak of two. There is dog *Selfish*, one of the worst dogs of all. When we get a bite from him we are never happy ourselves, and we make others unhappy too. Have you ever read the old story of the dog in the manger? It tells us how a

dog lay down in a manger of hay, and when a poor hungry ox came to eat his supper the dog began snapping at him. He could not eat the hay himself, and he would not let the ox eat it. That dog's name is *Selfish.*

There is another dog called *Greedy*, and he is a very near relation to dog *Selfish.* Children are often bitten by him, and they generally suffer, for greedy people by trying to get too much often lose all. There is a fable which tells us how dog *Greedy* was one day crossing a bridge over a river, and carrying a piece of meat in his mouth. As he looked into the water he saw his own shadow. Thinking it was another dog, who carried a larger piece of meat than his own, dog *Greedy* flew at him with an angry bark, and, as he opened his mouth, the meat fell into the river, and was lost. So it is often with greedy people, because they are not contented with what they have, they lose it altogether.

Now, dear children, these dogs of which I have been speaking are sins and temptations. Who sends them? Satan, the enemy of our souls. Is he very strong? Yes, but there is some one stronger. Jesus Christ is stronger. We know that because He conquered Satan. Well, we must be on our guard against these evil dogs, and we must pray to God to deliver us

His darlings, His children, from the power of the dog. Can you think of the best prayer for us to use? Let us say it together now—"Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

SERMON V.

TWO KINDS OF CLOTHING.

(Lent.)

1 PETER v. 5.

"Be clothed with humility."

A NEW suit of clothes! That's a subject in which you all take an interest. When the baby passes from long clothes to short clothes, you mothers remember the date as something very interesting. When a boy passes from petticoats to a jacket and trousers it is an event in his life. When a lad puts on his first coat he remembers that he is becoming a man, and must put away childish things. When a boy enters the army or navy, he puts on a new suit of clothes, blue or red, and that reminds him that he is bound to serve his Queen and

country, and that he must not disgrace his uniform. When a choir boy comes into the choir, he has a new kind of clothing given to him, a white surplice; that should always warn him to try to keep himself pure and good, because he is allowed to sing in the Church on earth, as the saints sing in the Church in Heaven, "clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands." So you see, children, there is a great deal of importance attaching to a suit of clothes. I am going to speak to you to-day about some different kinds of clothing, some good, others bad.

First of all, let us think of the clothes which God makes for his beautiful world. He clothes the grass of the field. Go and look at a pasture-field in the country, and you will see that God has clothed it with a beautiful green robe, and every night and morning the green robe is all trimmed and spangled with dew-drops. Or there is another field, blazing with yellow-buttercups and white daisies, that's the white and golden clothing which God has given to it. That same God dresses the woods in the springtime with a hundred different shades of colour, and clothes the earth beneath with the purple robe of wild hyacinths. Sometimes the good God wraps up all the earth in a white dress. That's the snow, and underneath the roots and seeds are quite warm and safe from the frost. God clothes the trees, from the great cedar of Lebanon, to

the humble bramble bush. Every tree has a different shaped dress, and a different shade of colour. Even in the winter, when the trees look so bare and cold, they are still clothed by God. Trees have two sets of leaves, one set for the summer, the other for the winter. I only found that out the other day, when I was reading a wise book. The buds on the branches, which open into leaves in the spring, are covered in winter by little scales, like the tiles on a roof. And these scales are leaves, and they keep warm the other leaves which are wrapped inside them, and will come forth in the spring-time. Have you ever noticed that parts of a beech or willow tree are covered in winter with a silky down, like hair, and that the buds on a horse chestnut are sticky with a kind of gum? Well, that silky down and that sticky gum cover the winter leaves, and makes them air tight, so that the warmth cannot get out, nor the cold come in. So God clothes the trees.

And God clothes the beasts and birds and gives each exactly the sort of dress which he requires. You have all seen the mole-hills in a field, and sometimes you have caught a glimpse of the mole himself. Well, God has clothed him in a dress like black velvet, which is just fitted for his home underground: and He has formed his feet like shovels, so that the mole can dig a tunnel through the earth. The animals which live in

cold regions have a warm clothing of fur, and those which live among snow and ice are white, so that their enemies may not easily see them. Do you know that the bones of birds are hollow? God makes them so that the birds may be able to fly lightly in the air. Some animals, like the tortoise and the snail, have a suit of armour to wear: that is given them because they cannot move fast, and escape from their foes. So God clothes the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air.

Now let us think about ourselves. In the Bible we hear of two kinds of clothing, the best and the worst. S. Peter says, "Be clothed with humility;" that's the best clothing. In the hundred and ninth Psalm we are told of a wicked man who "clothed himself with cursing as with a garment." That's the worst clothing. The best suit of clothes for a child of God is *humility*, for Jesus says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart." Can you tell me of two men mentioned in the Gospel, one of whom was clothed with humility, and the other with pride? Yes, the Pharisee and the Publican. And God listened to the man who was clothed with humility. What do we sing in the Magnificat? "He hath exalted the humble and meek." What sort of place does our Lord tell us to take when we are invited to a feast? The lowest place, because "he that exalteth himself shall be abased."

Now I have noticed that very often when children

are growing up into big lads and girls, there is a great change in their manners. The little boy who used to go merrily to school always had a bow for the clergyman and schoolmaster, and answered a question civilly and kindly. But now that little boy has grown up into a big lad, neither a child nor a man, and his clothes fit him badly, because he has grown out of them. But he has grown out of something else, and that is the clothing of humility. He thinks he is too big to touch his hat, too big to give a civil answer, too big to come to Sunday School or Church. So he hangs about the corners of the streets or lanes, and he gets into bad company, and becomes rough and rude, and altogether objectionable. All this has come to pass because he thinks he has outgrown the clothing of humility, and has cast it aside. He has got another kind of clothing instead. Perhaps he is clothed with *Pride*. That's a bad sort of dress, my children. Although he is still quite a boy, he thinks himself a man; and he tries to imitate the vices of a man, while he has only the sense of a child. He tells people that he is as good as they, he will not be spoken to, nor reproved; he talks very loud when he sees the clergyman or the schoolmaster pass, to let them know that he does not care for *them*. Oh! my boys, don't deceive yourselves, don't make this common mistake. There is nothing manly in being rough, or rude, or coarse, or conceited. People

will only look at you with sorrow, or contempt. Did you ever hear the old fable of the donkey who found a lion's skin? The donkey covered himself with the skin, and tried to play the lion, and frighten the people. But some of them spied his long ears, and recognised his well-known voice, and he was soon stripped of his lion's skin, and driven away. Now, my boys, if you are tempted to put on a suit of clothes which does not become you, if while still boys you put on the habits of a man, and of a bad man into the bargain, remember the fable of the ass in the lion's skin.

But when a child has outgrown the good clothing of Humility, and put on a full suit of Pride, there comes another evil from it. He often gives up his prayers and his Bible. Have you ever seen the picture of the infant Samuel kneeling down and saying his prayers? It is a great favourite in many cottage homes. Now is not that a better picture than that of a boy or girl who is ashamed to pray: who lies down at night without one word of thanksgiving or one request for pardon? My children, never think you are too big to pray. The older you get, and the more you go out into the world, the more need you have of God's help. Be ashamed of doing wrong, be ashamed of telling a lie, or of doing a mean or cruel action, or of using filthy words, but never be ashamed of asking God to help you, or of thanking Him for His mercies.

I told you that the Bible speaks of the worst kind of clothing, it tells us of a man who "clothed himself with cursing as with a garment." I take *cursing* there to means all sorts of bad language. Now if you were to go into a house where smallpox and fever were raging, you would not like to stay there. You would not wish to breathe the foul, deadly air of that house, you would not ask leave to carry away some of the clothes full of disease. Well, a house full of cursing and bad language is just as bad as one full of smallpox, the air is poisoned, the clothes are poisoned, for the people are clothed with cursing as with a garment. Get away from that foul place as fast as you can, and don't try to take any of the poison away with you. The old Greeks tell us a story about the death of Hercules. That strong hero had shot his enemy, Nessus, with a poisoned arrow, and the garment of the slain man was all stained with poisoned blood. Before he died, Nessus gave his clothing to the wife of Hercules, telling her that it would make her husband love her always. It came to pass after a time that she gave the fatal garment to her husband, and no sooner had he put it on, than the poison seized upon him, and when, in his agony, he tried to put off the clothing, it clung all the tighter, and so he died, killed by his own poison. So it is with the man who clothes himself with a garment of cursing, or bad talk, it clings to him, and poisons

him, body and soul. Have you ever heard the proverb, that "Curses, like chickens, always come home to roost"? It is a very true saying. The evil wishes and threats which are spoken in anger against another return on the swearer's own head. When an Arab is kicked by his camel, or when the beast refuses to go on, what do you think he does? He solemnly curses the camel, at the same time throwing a handfull of sand into the air, and most of that sand comes back into the Arab's own eyes. So it is with curses.

Then, again, there is filthy talk, That's a dirty garment to wear. There is nothing manly or brave in talking indecently, any more than there is in rolling in the mud. You would be ashamed to talk in that way before decent people, ought you not to to be ashamed to talk so before the All-pure God? Believe me, my children, bad talk is a foul and filthy garment.

There are several other kinds of clothing of which I might warn you. One of these is self-righteousness. I have seen a man with a very glossy black suit of clothes, very carefully buttoned up, and at first sight he looked most clean and respectable. But when I came to look more closely, I found that his linen was anything but white and clean. His respectability was all *outside*. Now we sometimes find a boy or girl setting himself up as being better than others. We find a

child of this sort very ready to tell tales of his companions, and ready to gain favour with teachers by being very demure and quiet in school-time, very ready to say, "*I* would not do such a thing as that,"—and yet anything but a good child out of school hours. I knew a boy of this sort once, a very quiet, soft-spoken lad, who used to bring me a present of flowers very often. After a time I found that he stole these flowers from neighbouring gardens, and then presented them to me, and soon after he robbed his employer, and was sent to a Reformatory.

Never be a hypocrite, children, never pretend to be one thing when you are something quite different. Don't wear a garment which looks very clean and glossy outside, but covers all kinds of impurity within. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves." "Ye shall know them by their fruits." If you hear a child singing a hymn, such as "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild," for instance, and if directly afterwards you see that child quarrelling with a school-mate and striking him, you can't believe in that child's piety, it is all *outside*. You have seen those plaster figures which are made in Italy, and sold about our streets? Well, they are very pretty to look at, but if you peep inside them you will find they are quite hollow, the beauty does not go *right through*. If we want to be God's

children, we must be real, genuine, and honest right through. And now one word more, and I have done. If your clothes are old, and worn out, or do not fit you, what must you do? You must get a new suit. Well, there are some kinds of clothing which we should cast off as soon as possible. If any of you have put on bad habits, foul, filthy clothing, such as pride, or falsehood, or bad talk, or any other sort of bad dress, you must change your clothes. Cast off the old garment, and go down on your knees, and ask God for Jesus Christ's sake, to give you a new dress. What do I mean by casting away the old garment? I mean that you must repent; that is, you must learn to see how foul and ugly the dress of sin looks. Then you must be really sorry that you have ever put it on; and next you must make up your mind, by God's help, to cast it away, and have no more to do with it. You must ask the dear Lord to help you; go to Him and say, "wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow; wash me thoroughly from my wickedness, and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me." God alone can make you clean, God alone can give you a garment of righteousness. If you have not kept your white robe carefully, if that garment given you in your baptism has become spotted by sin, ask the dear Lord Jesus, the children's Friend, to help you. He will say to you, "I counsel thee to

buy of Me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich: and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed." And you can buy these "without money, and without price."

SERMON VI.

SEASONABLE WORDS.

(Lent.)

PROVERBS XV. 23.

"A word spoken in due season, how good is it."

THERE are some words which are good at all seasons, and others which are never in season at all. I will try to tell you something of both. First of all, there are the words which God speaks to us, they are always in season. They were spoken a long time ago, and written in God's Book many a year since, and sometimes we neglect them, just because we have heard them so often. "Honour thy father and thy mother;" those are very old words, but they are always seasonable. I am very much afraid that some of you children

who are growing up, think you have outgrown this commandment. I don't think young lads and girls show the same respect and reverence for their father and mother as was the custom formerly. For my own part, I would not give much for the future of the boy or girl who cannot make a friend of his parents, and who thinks himself too clever to follow their advice. It is the beginning of a bad time when boys and girls have secrets from their mothers. Do you know that nearly all the good men and women in the world have been made so by their mothers? If a boy goes to his mother with all his secrets, his sorrows, his sufferings, his mistakes, if he never ceases to love her, there is good hope for him, in spite of his faults and failures.

A man, who was very famous in his day, tells us that when a boy he tempted a companion, younger than himself, to enter a cave on a wild part of the sea-coast. Whilst the boys were looking at the wonders of the cave, the tide came up unnoticed, and they were kept prisoners all night. The younger boy burst into tears, saying, "What will my mother think? I should care nothing for myself—but my mother." My children, when you are tempted to do wrong, stop, and repeat to yourselves the words of that little lad, "What will my mother think?"

Here is another word in season: *be gentle.* Especially

be gentle in your words and manners to your mother, or sisters, or anyone weaker than yourselves. There is nothing noble or manly in being rough, rude, and noisy. Sometimes you say of a companion who has a new suit of clothes, and some money in his pocket, that "he looks quite a gentleman." But it is not the money nor the clothes which make him deserve that name, he must be *gentle*, thoughtful for others, unselfish, These are the marks of a gentleman. Jesus Christ is the truest example of gentleness: whoever comes nearest to His example is most worthy of the name of gentleman. A lad sometimes fancies that he shows his independence by being uncivil, but he is mistaken, he is just breaking God's command "to be courteous." The famous Roman, Marc Antony, was one day walking with a friend, and a slave saluted him. The great Roman returned the salute politely. His friend was surprised that he should notice a mere slave. "Why," answered he, "would you have the slave show himself more a gentleman than Marc Antony?"

The greatest heroes have been celebrated as the most gentle and courteous in manner. There was Sir Walter Raleigh, of whom you have all heard, he was as brave as a lion, and as gentle as a woman. So was Sir Philip Sidney, that brave warrior who, when lying mortally wounded in his last battle, refused a cup of water, and gave it to a private soldier lying near him.

Be gentle, my children, and think of others before yourselves. A great man says, "A man has no more right to *say* an uncivil thing than to *act* one—no more right to say a rude thing to another than to knock him down."

Let me tell you a story of Sir William Napier. He was taking a walk in the country one day, when he met a little girl of five years, crying bitterly over a broken bowl. She had taken her father's dinner to the field, and on her way home had fallen, and broken the basin. She said she should be beaten on her return, and then looking up with a new hope into Sir William's face, she said, "But you can mend it, can't you?" He told her that was more than he could do, but he would give her sixpence to buy another. On feeling for his purse, however, Napier found that he had left it at home, so he promised to meet the little girl at the same spot next day, and to bring the sixpence with him. On reaching home, he found an invitation to dine at a distant place next day, with a friend whom he specially wanted to see. He knew that it would be impossible for him to accept the invitation, and to keep his appointment with the little child. Which did he do? "I cannot disappoint her, she trusted me," he said; so gave up his own pleasure for the sake of making a child happy.

Here is another word in season, God's own Word,

"Buy the Truth, and sell it not." *Be truthful.* No one has any right to call himself one of God's children unless he is truthful, because God is *Truth.* Can you tell me a text which shows us that Heaven is not for false people? "There shall in nowise enter into it anything that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or *maketh a lie.*" Now remember, my children, no one can tell one lie, and stop there. One falsehood makes many. You remember how the prophet's servant, Gehazi, went on telling lie after lie when he had once begun. So it is with all who go from the truth. Lying grows into a habit. When you are tempted to say something not quite true, it may be in boasting, or in relating some story, or to hide a fault, fight against the temptation at once, feel like the boy Washington, "I *cannot* tell a lie." King Alfred, of whom you have all read in English History, was called the *Truth-teller*, what a glorious title for a man to have! The great Duke of Wellington, who won Waterloo, was famous for his love of truth; this is what a famous poet says of the two—He "never sold the truth to serve the hour;

> "Truth-teller was our England's Alfred named;
> Truth-lover was our English Duke;
> Whatever record leap to light,
> He never shall be shamed."

Always speak the truth. It has been said, "Sin has

many tools, but a lie is the handle which fits them all." If once you begin to go from the truth you will go down hill very fast. Now I'm going to tell you a story of a brave boy who would not tell a lie. A Liverpool steamer, bound for New York, had been three days at sea, when a little lad, not ten years old, was found hidden away among some casks. He was a "stowaway," trying to get a free passage to America. The grim chief-mate of the steamer stood, surrounded by the passengers and crew, as he questioned the little stowaway. The boy told him that his step-father had put him on board, giving him a little food to last him till the ship was well at sea, and bidding him make his way to an aunt in Halifax; and the boy placed a crumpled paper with the aunt's address into the chief mate's hand. The sailors believed the lad's story, not so the mate. "Some of these men of mine are in the secret," he said, "point out this minute the man who stowed and fed you." The boy looked up with a thin, but fearless face, and answered, "I have told you the truth, and have no more to sa The mate turned angrily to the crew, and gave this order, "Reave a rope to the yard." Then pointing to the cord which hung from the yard-arm as from a gibbet, the mate said to the little stowaway, "You see that rope, my lad? I'll give you ten minutes to confess," he took out his watch as he spoke, "and if you do not tell the

truth before the time is up I'll hang you like a dog." The little fellow turned yet paler, but never flinched, whilst the crew began to utter angry murmurs. "Eight minutes," cried the mate; "if you've anything to confess you'd best be quick, for your time's nearly up." "I've told you the truth," answered the little lad, "and I cannot tell a lie. Please, may I say my prayers?" The mate nodded, and the boy went down on his knees on the deck, with the rope over his head, and, putting his small hands together, repeated softly the prayer which his mother had taught him. Then rising, and turning to the mate, he said very quietly, "I'm ready." In a moment a change came over the stern man's face. Tears sprang to his eyes, he caught the boy in his arms, and cried, "God bless you, my boy, you're a true Englishman, every inch of you, you would not tell a lie to save your life." Yes, he was a true hero, he was only afraid of one thing, of doing wrong.

SERMON VII.

MORE SEASONABLE WORDS.

(Lent.)

PROVERBS XV. 23.

"A word spoken in due season, how good is it."

I SPOKE to you lately some words in season, can you remember what they were? "Honour thy father and thy mother, be gentle, be truthful." Now I want you to hear some more words in season, hear these first,—*Be in earnest.* Have you ever watched a boat's crew rowing from a man-of-war? If the sailors don't row quickly enough, the officer will cry out, "Give way, my lads, give way with *a will.*" Now that is the way to do all work, *with a will.* God says so—"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Work

when you work, and play when you play, and do both *earnestly*. The motto which a famous old painter used to put on his pictures was, "*as well as I can*;" and that motto of Van Eyck is an excellent one for all, do *the best you can*. Whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well. No schoolmaster likes to see work half done, no employer likes to see his servant working in a *half-hearted* way, and above all, God does not respect work in which we have not done our best. Sometimes you children have to write a copy. And you begin very well, and form your letters very carefully, but when you are half through the copy, you begin to grow careless, and the page ends with crooked words and a great blot. That is because you are not in earnest to the end. So it is with some lives. They begin well enough, like the copy. The boy at school, or at service, starts very fairly, but he does not persevere, he is not in earnest, and so, although he began so well, he ends in failure, and perhaps in disgrace. I was reading a very good book lately, which gives this advice, *do in the day the day's work*. Every day has its duties, do not put them off till to-morrow, but work your work while it is called *to-day*. Make up your mind to be in earnest, and you will succeed. "I can't," never did anything; "I will try," has done much. "I *will* do it," has done wonders. Yes, every day brings its work to be done, its tempta-

tions to be guarded against, its innocent pleasures to be enjoyed. I read some simple rhymes the other day, which you must try to remember—

"There's a prayer that should be said
And a book that should be read,
Every day!

There's a work that should be wrought,
And a battle to be fought,
Every day!

There are duties to be done,
And victories to be won,
As soars and sets the sun,
Every day!

There's a Cross that must be borne,
And a thorny chaplet worn,
Every day!

If in patience we are strong,
We shall not suffer long,
But shall beat down fraud and wrong,
Every day!

And when the race is run,
And the battle has been won,
We shall rest, our duty done,
Every day!

Try then, my children, to do each day's work thoroughly every day, and then you will never have to say sadly, like the Roman Emperor, "I have lost a day." I will tell you of a good man who always tried to do a day's work in a day. He was called the

Venerable Bede, and he was a Priest of God, who lived in an Abbey in Northumberland, after the English became Christians. He has written some very interesting stories about those old English days. Bede never liked to be idle for a moment, and all the time which he could spare from his work as a Priest, he spent in study and writing. He fell ill about a fortnight before his death, and feeling that his time was short, he tried to make the most of every minute which was left him. One of the things he did in these last days was to turn S. John's Gospel into English. The day before he died, Bede was very weak, and could scarcely breathe, but he was quite cheerful, and spent the morning in dictating the Gospel to a little boy, perhaps a choir boy, named Wilbert, who wrote down the verses one by one, as fast as Bede turned them into English. Every now and then Bede would say, "Get on as quickly as you can, for I do not know how soon I may be gone." On the day of his death, which was in 742, (think, children, eleven hundred and forty years ago) Bede worked all the morning as before, and reached the last chapter of the Gospel; then he sent for his brethren from the Abbey to say farewell. As the bell rang for evening service, the boy Wilbert said, "Dear master, there is still one verse to be written." "Then write quickly," answered Bede, and told him what to put down. "Now it is finished," cried the boy, as he

laid down the pen. "Yes, it is finished," Bede said; "and now lift up my head, and hold me up, that I may look upon the Church where I have been used to pray." And as the boy was holding him up, he died, with a prayer upon his lips. God grant, my children, that when we come to die, we may not leave one verse of our life's story unfinished, but may say humbly, in the words of our dear Saviour, "I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do—it is finished."

Here is another word in season for you—*Persevere.* No matter what you have to do, whether it is to conquer a bad temper, or to curb an unruly tongue, or to break from some bad habit, or to get through a tough piece of work, or to do a hard sum, *persevere*, try, *try again.* You have often seen a little baby trying to walk. It looks as if those weak, bending legs would never carry the child upright. He falls every minute, yet he learns to walk at last. So when we try to walk in the right way, to keep out of the dirty ruts of sin, to keep in the middle of the road, we shall often fall at first: but if we persevere, all will be well. You have often seen people skating on the ice; how swiftly they glide along, what wonderful things they can do with their feet. Well, they could not do these things at first. When they put on skates for the first time, they went slipping and stumbling along, and they had

many falls, but their motto was, *Get up, and try again.* Make that your motto, if you find it hard to do right, hard to get through a day without offending God, or your parents, hard to keep on your feet, pray to God to give you strength, and each time you fall, *get up and try again.* There ought to be no such word as "I can't" among Christian boys and girls. "You *can* do all things through Christ who strengtheneth you." No one knows what he can do till he tries, and God helps those who help themselves.

I will tell you a story of a man, which was written for our learning by the same Bede of whom I spoke just now. The man was called Cadmon, the horse-tender, and he was a servant in an abbey in Yorkshire, and took charge of the horses. Cadmon was a kind, Godly man, but not educated or clever, and he could not even sing or play on the harp like his fellows. When there was a merry-making, the harp was passed round, and each in turn played upon it, and sang a song. When it came to Cadmon's turn, he could neither sing nor play, and this vexed him sorely, and often he would leave the merry company, and go away to his stable. This had happened one night, and Cadmon was asleep in his stable, when he dreamed a wonderful dream. A man stood before him, and said, "Cadmon, sing me something." And the horse-tender told him sadly that he could neither sing nor play, and

for that same reason he had left the feast. But the man answered, "For all that you must sing to me. Sing to me of the beginning of things." And then Cadmon began to sing a beautiful song, which he had never heard before, and Bede tells us that these were the two first lines—

> "Let us magnify meetly the Master of Heaven;
> The might of the Maker, the thoughts of His Mind."

When Cadmon awoke he could remember what he had sung, and was able to go on with the song, and put fresh verses as well as any poet of them all. Well, they brought the horse-tender before the learned men in the Abbey, and he told them of his dream, and they believed that he had received a gift from God. To see what he could do, they told Cadmon a story out of the Bible which he had never heard, for there were no English Bibles then, and they told him to turn the story into verse, and to sing it to them the next day. When the morrow came, Cadmon sang a fine new poem, which he had made out of the Bible story. So it was clear that he must use the gift which God had given him, and he was taken out of the stable, and placed in the Abbey, and by degrees he turned nearly all the Bible stories into verse, and some of them still remain written in old parchment books. So you see, children, Cadmon did not know what he could do till he tried. Whatever gift God has given you, and he has given

you all something, make the most of it. Because a work is small and common it must not be neglected. Have you ever heard a great musician play the organ in Church? You think what a grand thing it is to be able to play like that. But if you go behind the organ you see a boy blowing the bellows, without that humble worker the grand musician couldn't play a note. In this life some of us occupy high places, like this musician,—making sweet music,—others lowly situations like the organ-blower, in either place let us try to do our duty to God and our neighbour, and do it with all our might, and do it *well*.

SERMON VIII.

ABOUT GETTING ON.

(Lent.)

S. Luke xiv. 10.

"Go up higher."

I am going to speak to you about *getting on.* We hear the question asked very often, "How are you getting on?" People speak of a child at school, and they say, "How is he getting on?" You look at a man doing some work, and you ask the same question; you meet a man recovering from an illness, and you say to him, "How are you getting on?" And some one else also asks the same question, God asks how we are getting on. We are intended to get on, not to stand still. As we

grow older every minute, so we ought to be always moving on in other ways, learning something, improving. You children are sent to school that you may get on with your learning, and so be able to get on in the world. God sends us all into the world as into another school, a very large school indeed, where we may get on, and be made fit for Heaven. This life is God's school, and if we are diligent scholars we shall be prepared for the life everlasting. So you see, children, God means us all *to get on*. Well, if we are to get on, the first thing we must do is to *climb*. The child who gets on is not content to be at the bottom of the school, he begins there, but he climbs till he gets to the top. There are two things which people have to remember in climbing—first, to look up, and next, not to turn back. I was once climbing up a very steep cliff, overhanging the sea. When I had gone up a long way, I looked down, and directly my head began to grow dizzy, and my legs to tremble. So I looked up again, and went on climbing quite safely. A man once climbed up to a certain natural bridge over a torrent in America, and cut his name on it, higher than any man had ever done before. But when he tried to come down, he found it was impossible, the only safety for him was to keep on climbing right to the top. "So it is with all climbing in this life, there is no going down, it is either climbing, or falling." Remember, before

we can reach the top of anything high we must *climb*, not sit at the bottom and wish. Many of our greatest men began at the bottom of the ladder, with no advantages, and plenty of difficulties, but they were climbers, and they got to the top.

Faraday, the famous chemist, had very little education, and at twelve years old was an errand boy to a London bookseller and bookbinder. He got up, summer and winter, at five o'clock, and took out the daily papers to his customers. His master made him his apprentice, and whenever a book was sent to be bound, the boy read it first. He became one of the greatest chemists of the day. He was a climber. So was James Ferguson, the astronomer. He was only a poor boy, a labourer's son, in Scotland, but he was so anxious to learn that, when quite a little fellow, he would listen when his brother was taught to read, and could actually read himself before his father was aware that he knew the Alphabet. Ferguson was sent out to keep sheep for a farmer, and on starlight nights, he would lie in the fields, wrapped in a blanket, with a thread of small beads stretched out before him and the sky. What was he doing? He was watching the motions of the stars, and he would slide the beads along the thread till certain stars were hidden from his sight, and then try to measure the distance of one star from another. In time the poor shepherd boy became

famous, he not only learned astronomy, but watch-making, portrait-painting, and many other things. He was a climber.

There are hundreds of stories of poor boys who became great men, statesmen, soldiers, engineers, painters, because they were determined to get on, and to climb. I will tell you one other story of this kind. There was once a very famous painter in Spain named Murillo, and he had many pupils who used to paint in his studio. These pupils were waited on by a Mulatto slave named Sebastian Gomez. Oftentimes the young students amused themselves by laughing at the dark skinned negro, and making fun of him; no one ever thought of teaching him how to paint, or supposed that he knew one colour from another. But the despised mulatto slave was really a better artist than any of the young students. He used to watch and learn every day, and at night, instead of sleeping, he would practise his art. After a time he began during the night to correct some of the mistakes made by the pupils in the day, and Murillo was astonished to see an arm or leg added to a figure, or a rough, badly-coloured sky softened and made beautiful. How was all this done? Some thought it was done by magic. One day Murillo found a beautifully-painted head of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and no one knew how it came there; so he watched secretly, and at last discovered that the work was done

by the Mulatto slave. Afterwards Gomez rose to be a great painter.

But, my children, I want to speak to you about another kind of climbing, that which God expects of us. Every day God says to us all, "Go up higher"—higher in thought, and word, and deed. You all hope to go to Heaven one day; well, Heavenly life is so high a life, that we must climb up daily if we are to get there at last.

We must be content to climb step by step as men climb a ladder. I have read of a little child who was taken to a great cathedral. He stood on the marble floor, and looked up with wonder at the men and women who were walking in a gallery round the great dome, a hundred and fifty feet above him. How did they ever get there, thought the child. He longed to get there too, but he thought, "It's too high, too far for me." Then the child's father opened a door in the wall, and taking him by the hand, led him through it. The child saw some stone steps in a winding staircase. One by one he put his feet upon the steps, and presently he found himself in the gallery, with the blue dome just above his head, and the floor on which he had stood far below. He had come all the way step by step. So, dear children, must you climb; let Jesus take you by the hand, and lead you on step by step.

If every day you take *one* step upwards, by conquering one fault, by struggling with one bad habit, by getting the better of one selfish wish, you will get nearer to God, and farther from all that is low, and mean, and contemptible. We must not put off our thoughts of Heaven till this life is all but over. People who live always in a low-lying district, could not breathe mountain air, and we shall not be fit for the high life of Heaven unless we climb. Heaven means simply being with God, and doing the will of God. We should try day by day to get nearer to Him, and to do His will, that's why we are told to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in Heaven." Do you know that the higher you climb up the mountain the purer the air becomes, and the wider the view? So the higher you climb in life, the more you pray, the more you think about God, the more you love Jesus, the more you struggle with self, the purer your life will be, and you will see a far wider view than those who live down in the dirty ways of sin.

A little boy was once taken for the first time up a high mountain. When he got to the top, and looked on the grand, silent, melancholy hills, with the blue sky looking so near, and the world so far below, he said to his father, "May I say my prayers?"

Yes, my children, the more we climb, the nearer we

come to God, and the more we want to speak to God in prayer. I know of a tiny little boy, only about two years old, who looked up at the starry heavens one night, and said, "I should so like to climb up a ladder, and peep at God."

My little children, the dear Lord Jesus has given each of you a ladder to climb on, your prayers are steps on the ladder, the Sacraments and teaching of the Church are steps on the ladder, the troubles and sorrows of your little lives, the conquests over your tempers and your faults, all these are steps on the ladder and the Hand of Jesus is ever helping you upward to that life, where beyond the stars, you shall look on God, and be satisfied.

SERMON IX.

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE.

(Lent.)

2 TIM. II. 3.

"A good soldier of Jesus Christ."

I SUPPOSE many of you have read of those strange wars called the Crusades? They were undertaken to deliver the Holy Sepulchre of Jesus at Jerusalem out of the hands of the heathen. Thousands of brave men, besides their friends and followers, went to the Holy Land, at different times, to fight in the Crusades. The warriors wore a blood red cross on their clothing, from which they got their name of Crusaders, and their motto was, "*The Will of God.*" It was a very good motto, but not a very true one for them, for I am

afraid they did many cruel and wicked things which certainly were not the will of God; and thousands of people perished miserably abroad, who might have been doing useful work at home. Well, amongst these Crusades there was one called the Children's Crusade. A boy in France went about singing in his own language—

"Jesus, Lord, repair our loss,
Restore to us Thy Holy Cross."

Crowds of Children followed him, singing the same words. No bolts, no bars, no fear of fathers, or love of mothers, could hold them back, they determined to go to the Holy Land, to work wonders there! This mad crusade had a very sad ending; of course young children could do nothing, being without leaders, or experience, or discipline, and they all perished miserably either by land or sea.

Now I want you to think about another Children's Crusade, in which you are all engaged. What do we mean when we pray for the Church "*militant* here on earth?" We mean the *fighting* Church, the Church on the battle-field of the world. We are God's army, and every one of us, man, woman, and child, must try to show that he is a good soldier of Jesus Christ. When were you made Christ's soldier, my children? At your Baptism, when you were admitted into the

Body of Christ's Church, and signed with the Cross, as a token that hereafter you should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ Crucified, and manfully to fight under His banner against sin, the world, and the devil, and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and Servants unto your life's end. So you see you are *pledged* to fight as long as you live, and since you fight under the sign of the Cross, your warfare is a Crusade. What do you think is required of a good soldier? First of all, he must be *brave*. It has been said that an English soldier or sailor never knows when he is beaten. Now I hope you will all grow up brave English men and women, because the word coward does not seem to go well with the name Briton. But there's a better sort of courage than that of a fighting soldier, that's the courage of a Christian, which makes him do right at any cost; which makes him bear sorrow, and insult, and loss, for Jesus Christ's sake. We all like to hear about acts of bravery, like that of the little midshipman who spiked the Russian guns in the Crimean war; or of the boy Ensign, Anstruther, who at the battle of the Alma planted the colours of the 23rd Regiment on the wall of the great Redoubt, and then fell, shot dead, with the colours drooping over him like a pall. But the courage which is thought most of in Heaven is the courage to do right. The boy or girl who won't tell a lie to escape punishment, the schoolboy

who is brave enough to say his prayers with a whole bedroom of companions laughing and jeering at him; the young servant-girl who won't cheat and lie, although her fellow-servants persecute her; the child who is brave enough to say, "No," when he is asked to do wrong; these are the heroes whose names are written in God's Book. You little soldiers of Jesus, members of the Children's Crusade against the world, the flesh, and the devil, must pray to be brave. You must be brave to endure hardness, to deny yourselves for Christ's sake. Every soldier in war time has to give up much which is pleasant, and dear to him: you must not expect to have your own way always if you are Christ's soldiers.

I have read a story of a wounded soldier lying on a battlefield, whose mouth had been struck by a shot. When the doctor placed a cup of water to his mouth, the man was eagerly going to drink, when he stopped, and said, "My mouth is all bloody, it will make the cup bad for the others." That soldier, in giving up self for the sake of others, was more of a hero then than when charging against the foe. Try to remember that story, children, and if you are tempted to do anything selfish or wrong, stop and think, "*It will make it bad for the others.*"

You must expect to find enemies and difficulties if

you do what is right. Everyone was against Daniel because he prayed to God. Everyone was against Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, because they would not bow down to an idol. But God was on their side.

There was once a famous man of God named Athanasius, you all know the Creed which bears his name in the Prayer-book. He was bold enough to maintain the true faith of Christ against Emperors, and Bishops, and he was driven into banishment over and over again. Some of his friends advised him to give in, for, said they, the world is against you; "Then," answered Athanasius, "I am against the world." Now you must, as Christ's soldiers, "learn to suffer and be strong." Remember the Lord Jesus is with you, and He will give you strength enough for your need, you must do *your* part, be sure God will do his part. You must not expect difficulties and troubles to be removed out of your way, nor the road of life made all smooth and easy for you. If we are lazy in our work we can't succeed, if we are lazy in our religion we can't expect to be rewarded. To win a victory we must fight, to get to the end of a journey we must bear fatigue. Let me tell you a fable about that. Three animals, an ermine, a beaver, and a wild boar, made up their minds to seek a better country, and a new home. After a long and weary journey, they came in sight of a beautiful land

of trees and gardens, and rivers of water. The travellers were delighted at the sight, but they noticed that before they could enter this beautiful land, they must pass through a great mass of water, filled with mud and slime, and all kind of snakes and other reptiles. The ermine was the first to try the passage. Now the ermine has a very delicate fur coat, and when he found how foul and muddy the water was, he drew back, and said, that the country was very beautiful, but that he would rather lose it than soil his beautiful coat. Then the beaver proposed that as he was a good architect, as you know beavers are, he should build a bridge across the lake, and so in about two months they might get across safely. But the wild boar looked scornfully at his companions, and plunging into the water, he made his way, in spite of mud and snakes, to the other side, saying to his fellow-travellers, "Paradise is not for cowards, but for the brave."

Dear children, between you and the Paradise of God there lies a long journey, the enemy's country, where the devil and his angels will fight against you, where there are deep pools of trouble to be gone through, rough, stony, roads of temptation to be traversed, high rocks of difficulty to be climbed: but don't be afraid, only be brave, and go forward, and follow Jesus your leader, and you will be able to say, as S. Paul said, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through

our Lord Jesus Christ." Every day of your lives there is a battle to be fought, and hard work to be done, if you are really good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Every day you must fight with temper, or falsehood, or selfishness, or pride, or idleness, or impurity: you must fight yourselves, and help others to fight, remembering whose soldiers you are, Crusaders, soldiers of the Cross.

Well, we have seen that soldiers must be brave, what else must they be? *Obedient?* Can you remember any one mentioned in the Bible, who was a very tall, powerful, and brave soldier, and yet not a good soldier, because he was disobedient? King Saul. Yes, God told Saul to do a certain thing, and he did not, and God would no longer have him as a soldier. Do you remember what was said to him? "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." The first thing a soldier has to learn is to obey orders. If you really love the Lord Jesus Christ you will keep His commandments.

About thirty years ago, a troop-ship, called the *Birkenhead*, struck on a rock off the coast of Africa. There were a great number of troops on board, and when all who could be saved had left the sinking ship, the officer gave the order for the soldiers to parade and stand at attention, and so standing, as firm and steady as if they were on their parade ground at home, officers and men went down with the ship. They obeyed their orders.

Remember, little flock, a soldier must not do what he likes, but what he is ordered to do. May the dear Lord help you to be brave, and faithful, and obedient soldiers of Him, "Whose you are, and Whom you serve."

SERMON X.

THE PLEADING SAVIOUR.

(Good Friday.)

HEBREWS VII. 25.

"He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

CAN you tell me what that word *Intercession* means? A child was once asked the question, and he answered, "It means speaking a word to God for us." Supposing a servant has done wrong, and his master is going to discharge him. And suppose a friend of the master comes to him, and says, "I am sorry for your servant; he has done wrong certainly, but I believe he is penitent, and I want you to forgive him, and give him another trial." Then the master answers, "You have done me much good, and I am deeply indebted

to you: for your sake I will pardon the man." So by that friend's *intercession* the servant is restored.

Now who is it who died for us on Good Friday? The Lord Jesus Christ. And who is it who "ever liveth to make intercession for us?" The Lord Jesus Christ. Did our Lord intercede for men before He died? Yes, when He was on the earth He prayed for all men. When he was hanging on the cruel Cross all those terrible hours of Good Friday, He was interceding for men. Do you remember one of his speeches from the Cross—"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." That was an intercession for his enemies. Can you tell me anyone who was forgiven in answer to that prayer? The penitent thief—he went with Jesus into Paradise. Was Christ's work finished when he died on the Cross? No, He rose again for our justification on Easter morning. And even then His work was not done. He showed his Church for forty days, all that must be done and taught after He was gone into Heaven. And when Jesus ascended up to Heaven His work was not done. He is doing something for us now—what is it? Interceding for us, pleading before the throne of God. Every time we repent, and are truly sorry for our sin, and tell God so, Jesus takes our prayer and our confession, and offers it as a Priest in Heaven, and pleads for us, showing His pierced hands and feet and side, and all the marks of

His agony, and thus He pleads the Sacrifice which He offered on the Cross, and makes intercession for us sinners.

Once, among the old Greeks, there was a man named Æschylus, and he was condemned to death, and was going to be led to execution. He had a brother called Amyntas, who had gained victories for Greece, and in one battle had lost his hand. Just as Æschylus was going forth to die, Amyntas entered the court, and, without saying a word to the Judges, he held up on high the arm which had no longer a hand. Then the Judges remembered his services, and pardoned his brother. Children, the dear Lord Jesus is ever holding up those wounded Hands marked with the cruel nails, and pleading for us. Do you think He can remember the names of all, even of the little children like you? Oh! yes, a Father never forgets His children, and we are God's children, remember. All our names are written on the heart of Jesus. Are any of you careless or thoughtless on this sad, solemn day? Try to think, try to remember, Jesus is interceding for me *now*, Jesus is holding up His pierced Hands for me *now*, my name is on the heart of Jesus *now*. You know many people don't keep Good Friday holy, they make it a day of amusement and noise; it is because they don't stop to *think*, they don't remember what Jesus did, what He is now doing. A friend of mine, a clergyman

in London, was going one Good Friday to preach in a very poor neighbourhood. As he hurried along the streets, where many of the people didn't seem to care about the day, the Church bell began to toll, and as my friend passed two young men, one said to the other, "It sounds very solemn, doesn't it?"

Yes, my children, Good Friday is a very solemn day indeed. I want you to be very serious. You know I like to see you happy and cheerful, but you must not suppose all life is going to be a play-time. As you grow older, you will find that—

"Life is real, life is earnest,"

a very serious thing indeed. As you grow older, you will find that the pleasures and amusements, which you think so much of now, pass away very quickly. I think you have all seen the pictures in a magic lantern. You know how the little ones shouted with delight at the bright figures on the curtain. They saw blue seas, and sunny skies, and waving trees, and gilded palaces, and their little hands were stretched out to grasp the beauteous vision, and lo! it was gone, it had faded away, it was only a dissolving view. Well, my children, if we are in earnest, and try to do our duty, and get the better of our sins, then, for the sake of Jesus our Intercessor, God will give us "such good things as pass man's understanding," and a crown "that fadeth not away."

Have you watched children blowing bubbles? Perhaps the child is standing by the churchyard wall, and the bright bubbles rise up one after another, the child eagerly watches one floating globe of gold and green and crimson, and presently it flies over the wall of the Churchyard, and strikes against a tombstone, and is gone. A good many people, men and women, as well as children, spend their time in blowing bubbles. One man's bubble is to grow rich, another's bubble is pleasure, but all these bubbles come sooner or later to the churchyard, and end there. Be in earnest, children, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and his righteousness."

Now I want to say something more to you about intercession. I have told you that Jesus Christ is always pleading, interceding for us. We should try to intercede for each other, to pray for each other. When you say your prayers you ask God to forgive you, and to help you to be good, and to keep you from dangers and temptations, and you pray for your parents and friends, and your brothers and sisters. But I want you to do more than this—to pray for your school-fellows, and all the children in the parish. How blessed a thing it would be, if in every parish each child were to pray for every other child. Those prayers from little lips would be very sweet and precious in Heaven, and the dear Lord Jesus would offer them as a sacrifice of a "sweet-

smelling savour." Oh! my children, pray for each other. If you know of any boys or girls who are not going on well, who have got into bad ways, do not speak evil of them, nor judge them, but just *pray for them.*

I'll tell you about an Intercession service, which I always have at a Mission. I put up a box in the Church, and ask the people who want prayers offered for them, to write down their request on a slip of paper, and put it in the box. I have had thousands of such papers, and very sad and touching many of them were. Sisters asked us to pray for drunken brothers, mothers begged us to pray for disobedient children, people who had committed great sins asked for prayers, people who had met with terrible sorrow asked for prayer. On one night during the Mission, when the Church is full of people, I kneel before the Altar, and read out these petitions one after another, and all the people say after each is read, "Hear us, Holy Jesus." Very often the people are sobbing and crying as they intercede one for another, everyone praying for everyone else. I have many of these intercession papers sent in by children. I remember one, it was written in a child's round-hand, in these words, "For a little boy, that he may govern his temper." Another was from a girl—she wrote, "Do please pray for my poor drunken uncle, I want him so to love Jesus." I found another

of these papers in my draw to-day, it says, "Dear Missioner, please pray for my wife, as she is not able to come to hear your dear prayers through illness; also for me, that I may live a godly life, through this mission being held in this parish." Now this was evidently written by some poor working man, and spelt all wrong, but it was so thoroughly *true* and *real*. I never like to destroy these papers, they seem to me like letters addressed to God, and I'm sure he does not mind the bad spelling. Now could not you children do something for each other, and have an intercession service? At least you could do this, you could put down on a card or a paper the object of your intercession, like this—For the children of such a school, for the children in such a street, or the names of anyone may be put down. You need not pray for children only, but let the children be the children's *special* subject of intercession. Yes, and I want you to take others into your prayers, all the children who don't know and love Jesus. Here you are well-cared for, and well taught, but in London, and many other great cities, there are hundreds of poor children who are brought up in the streets from babies, they are often nearly starving, they are taught to lie and steal; they live in the midst of dirt, and drink, and bad talk, and they do not know or love the Lord Jesus. But He knows them, and He intercedes for those poor waifs and strays. "Do you

hear the children crying, O my brother," that's what might be said to us—the poor neglected children crying for bread, and above all, wanting the Children's Bread, the Bread of Life. Other people, older and stronger than you, are beginning to help these *gutter children*, as they are called, but you can do something, a great deal, if you pray for them. Each parish might pray for the neglected children in some special place, we might pray for the waifs and strays of London, another parish might take Liverpool, and so on. I will tell you about a children's service which I once held at a Mission in the East of London. There were boys and girls in the mission room, and the girls were very quiet, but the boys were very rough and disorderly. It was almost impossible to make them listen. There was one little fellow, about five or six years old, and he was crawling about on the floor just in front of me, and amusing himself by blacking his face at the stove. The big boys kept poking at him with sticks, and enjoying the fun. Well, at last I could not get their attention fixed at all, so I took up the little boy by the hand, and asked him to stand by me on the altar step whilst I talked to them. I thought the little fellow might be frightened, or angry, at my taking him up, but he stood by my side whilst I preached, as good as possible, one little black hand in mine. When all the rough, unruly boys saw that little one standing quietly there

they became quiet too, and listened very attentively. When I knelt to pray, that little boy knelt by my side, and put his little dirty hands together. You can't think what a help and comfort that little child was to me in that service; I thought of the time when our Lord took a child, and set him in the midst, and when I saw the noisy lads grow quiet, I remembered the words of the prophet, "A little child shall lead them."

We shall have kept this Good Friday to some purpose, if you make up your minds for the future to make prayers and intercessions for the children of this place, and those in London, who know not the love of Jesus. Kneel down now, and ask the Lord Jesus to hear you:

"Intercessor, Friend of sinners,
Earth's Redeemer, plead for me,
Where the songs of all the sinless,
Sweep across the crystal sea."

SERMON XI.

SOWING AND GATHERING.

(Easter.)

1 Cor. xv. 38.

"To every seed his own body."

There are in Rome some very ancient burying-places called the catacombs, and on the walls there are many epitaphs to Christians buried there, some very beautiful. One of these epitaphs is exceedingly short, it is this—*Tentianus vivit*, that is, *Tentianus lives*. That seems perhaps a strange thing to put on a grave, yet it is perfectly true. The soul of that Christian, Tentianus, is alive, and his body will rise again. Sometimes we see a long epitaph on a tomb all about death, as if that were the end of all things. The people who write these

gloomy epitaphs have forgotten the Resurrection. I like the words in the Catacombs best. There was a great painter once called Albert Dürer, he lies buried in his native city of Nuremberg, in Germany, and on his tomb-stone they have put the word *Emigravit*—he has gone to another country.

"*Emigravit* is the inscription on the tomb-stone where he lies;
Dead he is not—but departed—for the artist never dies."

This Easter teaches us that as Jesus rose from the grave with His Body, so shall we rise with our body. Where was the soul of Jesus during the three days between the Crucifixion and the Resurrection? In the place of departed spirits. Yes, and His Body was in Joseph's new tomb, and when it was time for the Resurrection, the soul came back into the body again. So it will be with us, our bodies will be laid in a grave in the churchyard or cemetery—cemetery means a *sleeping-place* you know—and our souls will be in the place of departed spirits, and when the great day of Resurrection comes, we shall have bodies into which our souls will come again. But you are thinking, my children, that our bodies will moulder away into dust. Yes, but God who made the first man out of the dust can make our bodies again out of the dust. One of the old saints of the Church, S. Chrysostom, whose prayer, you all know, explains this very well to us. He says, that when we pull down a house in order to re-build it,

or repair its ruins, we take the inhabitants out of it, lest they should be injured by the dust and rubbish, and we find them some other dwelling till the house is rebuilt and beautified. Then we bring them back to their old home made into a better dwelling. So when God overthrows our worn-out, decayed body, all falling to pieces from disease or old age, He calls out our soul for a time, and takes care of it in some part of His great Kingdom; and when our body is repaired and restored, and made fit for the resurrection, He places our soul back again in its accustomed home.

You, my children, all know something of death, for it comes to all houses sooner or later. There is a very beautiful story among the Indians, which tells us how a young mother lost her only child, and went in the agony of her grief to the Great Prophet of her people, asking if the dead child could be restored to life. The prophet told her that if she could obtain a mustard-seed from a house where there had never been a death, her child should be given back to life. The mother at once set forth among the houses of her neighbours, and begged for a mustard-seed. At the first house the seed was given readily; but when she asked if death had ever been there, they told her how their eldest son had died there in the midst of his strength and beauty. Then the mother turned away sadly, and sought another house: but there they spoke of the white-haired father

who had passed away. In another home they told of the young wife's death, and so in every house there was a tale of death; and the mother knew that her child might not return to her. But I want you to feel that although death comes to all our bodies, we are just as much alive five minutes *after* death, as we were five minutes before. When your little brother died, you missed the bright smile, and the loving look in the eyes, but what made him love you, and smile upon you, is just as much alive as ever, his soul has only gone from one kind of life to another. So when you walk through the churchyard, *God's acre*, as it has been rightly called, I want you to feel, as you look at the tiny graves of the children, that their tired little bodies are only resting in their new cradles; or when you stand by the grave of father or mother, I want you to be able to say, not "Here lies my dead father," but, "I believe in the resurrection, my father lives." If we did not believe in the resurrection, the churchyard would be a sad place indeed, we should be obliged to say—

"Colder, colder, colder still,
Upward steals a vapour chill;
Strong the earthly odour grows—
I smell the mould above the rose."

But when we believe in the resurrection, the churchyard becomes God's garden, and all the dead bodies

are precious seeds sown there, one day to grow up into glorified bodies; and we can say—

"O'er the earth there comes a bloom;
Sunny light for sullen gloom,
Warm perfume for vapour cold—
I smell the rose above the mould."

Now let us look at the resurrection in another way. God's world is always showing us a resurrection. You sow a seed in your garden, and it comes up as a new body, a flower. The chrysalis opens, and there comes forth a butterfly, the resurrection body of what was once a caterpillar. S. Paul tells us that God gives "to every seed his own body," that means, that if you sow wheat it will come up wheat, if you sow thistle seed you will gather thistles. What you sow you will reap. Now remember, that all your acts and words and thoughts are like so many seeds sown, they will come up, they will have a resurrection. You may have forgotten what you said or did some time ago, but it will come up, and bear fruit, it will have a resurrection here, and at the Day of Judgment it will rise again. All the good things we have been able to do, the kind acts done to the poor and needy, the loving words spoken to our parents or friends, these are not lost or forgotten. They will grow up, and on the Judgment Day they will stand round us like sweet-smelling flowers. Think, my children, each time you try to do right for Christ's

dear sake, each time you deny yourself, or give up your own way, or conquer a bad thought, just think—"I am sowing a good seed for the Day of Judgment, it will blossom and smell sweet on the great day of gathering in the Harvest." Yes, and the bad things we do, and say, and think, they too are seeds, and they will grow up a bitter crop, both here and hereafter. All our acts, good and bad, have a resurrection There is a fable among the ancients, that Jason sowed the ground with dragon's teeth, and there sprang up an army of fierce armed men. Every sin wilfully committed, every mean, cruel action, every bad word spoken, every impure thought indulged in, is a dragon's tooth sown, and it will spring up into an enemy of our peace. What sort of resurrection can you look forward to? It depends on what seed you are sowing—don't sow *thorns and brambles*, they will grow up to tear you and others also. Angry tempers, passionate words, sulky humours, these are all thorns and brambles, and they will make you suffer, and those about you. When a child is disobedient, wilful, violent, he is platting a crown of thorns, do you know for whom? for himself, for his friends, and above all for Jesus. Stop and think, when you are tempted to do wrong, "I'm doing what those cruel men did of old, I'm platting a crown of thorns for Jesus." Don't sow *nettles and thistles*, those prickly, stinging things will grow up to hurt you, and others

also. Ill-tempered, fretful, discontented people are sowing nettles and thistles, and they are sure to have a large crop. But what a disagreable crop it is! You can no more be happy with an ill-tempered person, or a fretful person, or a grumbling person, than you can sleep comfortably in a bed full of prickly thistles and stinging nettles. I will tell you what to sow, sow *sweetness* and you will gather sweetness. Once a little boy sowed the seed of a violet on a bank in his garden. Before long he was taken away to a foreign land, where he grew up to be a man. After long years he came back, and went to visit his old home. In the garden he found a bank covered with sweet-smelling violets. He had sown sweetness, and he gathered it. Every little loving word, every little kindly act of ours, is like the violet seed, it will grow, and bring us a crop of love and sweetness. Ask the dear Lord Jesus to sow in your hearts the seed of love and kindliness, of gentleness and faith, ask Him for good seed, that you may sow it day by day in the field of this world, and it will grow; so that on the great Easter day of all, at the end of the world, you shall stand with glorified bodies, and every good thing, which God has given you strength to do, shall blossom as a sweet flower at the feet of Jesus.

SERMON XII.

GOD'S GREAT FAMILY.

PSALM L. 11.

"I know all the fowls of the mountains; and the wild beasts of the field are mine."

I AM going to talk to you about being kind to animals. God is love, and He cares for all His creatures. Do not suppose that because you are so much bigger and stronger than a fly that you have a right to be cruel to it. The same God who made you, made the fly, and as He gave you the power of walking upright on your feet, He gave the fly the power of walking upside down on a ceiling. Both you and the fly are members of God's great family. There was once a holy man of God named S. Francis, he was good and loving to all men,

and not only to them, but to all God's creatures. He used to call the birds and the beasts his brothers and sisters, because he loved everything which God had made, and when he was dying he was perfectly peaceful and happy, and said with his last breath, "Welcome, sister Death."

Now no one has a right to be called a good Christian who is cruel to any of God's creatures. Our religion is not worth much if our dogs and cats and other animals don't come in for a share of it. Very often men and boys are very brutal and cruel to the horses and donkeys which they have to drive. It is a common mistake to say that a donkey is a very stupid and very obstinate animal, and that the more he is knocked about the better he works. Now that's all wrong. A donkey is not naturally stupid, nor obstinate. He is very *thoughtful*, he always thinks where he is going to put his feet, that is what makes him so sure-footed. It often happens that the boy who is driving the donkey is stupid, and he is too blind to see his own fault, and so thinks it is in the donkey. Then a donkey is not naturally obstinate, he is not flighty or excitable like some people, but very sober, and steady, and trustworthy, and so his enemies give him a bad name and call him obstinate. But you may spoil the donkey's temper as you may spoil a child's. If you are continually knocking a boy about the head with a thick stick,

you can't expect him to grow up very intelligent or very sweet-tempered. And so if you treat an animal in that way, and half starve him into the bargain, it is your own fault if he becomes stubborn. Kindness will work wonders, where the stick will only make failures. I have said a donkey is not naturally stupid. I have one at home, a great pet with my children. She always looks round at me when I call her by name, and comes up to me in the meadow, and expects something nice in my hand. But if a boy tries to catch her, she puts back her ears and runs at him, because she looks on boys as her natural enemies. She knows the difference between friends and foes. I know a donkey who would open the churchyard gate, in order to graze on the grass, and I have read of a still more wonderful animal in Spain. There they treat donkeys very well, the Spaniards know they are neither stupid nor obstinate, and so they make pets of them, and feed and groom them carefully, and they are handsome and prosperous-looking. Well, a certain poor man in Spain had for many years carried milk into Madrid, to supply his regular customers. Every morning he and his donkey travelled the same road. The man fell ill, and had no one to send to market. The wife suggested that they should send the donkey alone. The panniers were filled with the milk-cans, and the village Priest wrote an inscription, asking customers to measure

their own milk, and return the vessels. The donkey set off with his load, and in time returned with his milk-cans empty. This he did for several days. In Madrid the bell-handles mostly hang down by the side of the walls, and it appears that the donkey had stopped before each customer's house, and if no one came in a little while, he pulled down the handle with his mouth and rang the bell. Now I don't think we must call a donkey stupid after that.

If any of you are tempted to be unkind and cruel to an animal, just try to put yourself in his place. Think to yourself, how should I like to be treated in this way. You know that the old heathen used to think that men's souls after death passed into different animals, so that he who had been a great soldier or speaker might become a dog, or a lion, or a horse, Now if that could really be the case, if some of you children were to become dogs, or horses, or donkeys, don't you think you would find it very hard to be kicked, and beaten, and sworn at, when all the time you were doing your best? Ah! If the animals could speak to us, as Balaam's ass did once, what sad, reproachful things they would have to say!

A man was cruelly beating a horse one day, and a neighbour remonstrated with him, and asked him why he did it. "Because," said the man, "he is the most

obstinate and ill-conditioned beast in the world." "Ah," said the neighbour, "I should like to hear what the horse has to say about it." If you could change places with the donkey you were belabouring so unmercifully yesterday, I wonder what you would say to the heavy blows showered upon your head and sides. There is a fable of an enchantress called Circe, who turned a number of people into pigs. I wish just for one day the old fairy tales would come true, and all the unkind boys and girls could be changed into the animals which they ill-use, and could feel in their own bodies what the poor dumb cattle feel in theirs. Well, that cannot be, but I hope you will try to remember my words, and think of the sin of causing God's creatures unnecessary pain.

Sometimes when I am walking along the roads I hear lads swearing at the horses which they are driving. Nothing seems to me much more cowardly and contemptible, than to use bad language to a poor dumb animal who cannot answer. Every one of those bad words are set down in God's Book be sure, though they were only spoken to an animal. "That horse knows perfectly well when I swear at him," said a coachman to a passenger. "Yes," was the answer, "and so does God." We have no more right to abuse or illtreat an animal than we have to abuse or ill-treat a man, the same God is the Maker of both. Be kind

to all God's creatures, and you will win their love and gratitude.

Do you remember, children, the story of Androcles and the lion? Androcles took a thorn out of a lion's foot, and sometime afterwards he was ordered to be thrown to the wild beasts by the cruel ruler of his city. When all the crowd had met together in the amphitheatre, expecting to see Androcles torn to pieces by a lion, to their astonishment the animal came forward and licked the man's hand, for it was the very lion for which Androcles had done a good turn. Then all the people were amazed, and the prisoner was set free. We read in the newspapers lately of an elephant which remembered an injury, and crushed to death a man who months before had treated it most cruelly.

I advise you children to try to study the habits of animals, watch them when you are out in the fields, read about them in a book of natural history, and when you find what wonderful sense and knowledge God has given to them, you will not venture to be cruel. If you watch a bird building her nest, or sitting on her eggs, while her mate sings to her in the green wood, you will not feel inclined, I think, to go and destroy that poor bird's house with wanton hands. On a sunny day in summer nothing is more beautiful than the butterflies which float about like winged flowers in the

air. Yet as soon as some of you children catch sight of them, you take off your caps, and try to catch them. And if you succeed, what then? Look into your hot hand, and you will see a poor, bruised, dingy-looking insect, all its beauty gone. You have spoilt what God made beautiful, just as some wanton people will pick lovely flowers, and trample them under foot. Again I say, study the nature of animals, and you will find that many despised creatures, such as the toad for instance, are quite harmless, and very useful. You have no idea what wonderful creatures even the smallest and commonest of insects are. Solomon says, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard;" and indeed everyone, whether he be idle or industrious, can learn something from an ant's nest. I have not time to tell you half of the wonderful things connected with ants. Their nests are just like cities, and there are different classes of ants to do different kinds of work. The very young ants, whose skin is soft and tender, devote themselves to feeding the little white grubs, which change in time into insects. As they grow older and stronger the ants do other kinds of work, for one thing they become soldiers, and go out to battle, or defend the nest against enemies. Do you know that some kinds of ants keep slaves? Well, these ants go out to find food for their mistresses, who stay at home and attend to household duties. If any one ant is taken prisoner

when out on a foraging expedition, or is otherwise prevented from returning home, another is sent out to take his place. I dare say you never heard that some kinds of ants *keep cows*. Their cows are a certain kind of green fly, which is often found on flowers, and they give a sweet fluid, which is to the ant what milk is to us. These wonderful creatures build covered cow-sheds in the earth for their tiny cattle. Ants are very fond of keeping pets, only they make them work for their living. Two kinds of insects are found in the galleries of an ant's nest, and it is supposed that they are the scavengers who keep clear the streets of the wonderful insect city. A curious little beetle, which is quite blind, is found living among the ants. He seems to be very helpless, and cannot even feed himself, and the ants take great care of him, and keep him perfectly clean, oftentimes they may be seen licking him all over. As the blind beetle does not seem to have anything to do, perhaps the ants keep him out of charity, like an old blind man in an alms house. There is one kind of ants called the Amazons, and they teach us a lesson on the folly of depending upon others, instead of helping ourselves. These Amazon ants keep slaves to do all the work for them, and they have actually lost their teeth from want of using them, and they cannot even feed themselves. They have been seen to be starving in the midst of food, because there were no

slaves to feed them. But I must not stay to talk to you any more about the ants. What I want you to learn is, that you must never despise any of God's creatures, however small. "In wisdom hath he made them all." I wonder if there is any Heaven for the animals! Many wise and good men have thought that there is. One thing I am quite sure of, there will be no Heaven for those who are cruel to any of God's creatures. If we really love God we shall love our brother also, yes, and all the humble brothers and sisters, the beasts and the birds and the insects, of God's Great Family.

"He prayeth best, who loveth best
All things both great and small;
For the dear God who loveth us,
He made and loveth all."

SERMON XIII.

LEARNING TO WALK.

EPH. V. 8.

"Walk as children of light."

I SUPPOSE that all you boys and girls think that you know how to walk. You would laugh at the idea of being taught how you are to use your legs now, as you were when you were babies. Well, we will see. You all know how to walk along the country lanes and turnpike roads, but if you were to go to London for the first time, you would find that you did not know how to walk. I have sometimes seen a countryman in one of the crowded streets of the City of London, trying to make his way along, and every minute

he would run against some passenger, and get in the way of another, till the busy city folks were quite angry with him. There is a particular way of walking in crowded streets, and, like everything else, it has to be learned.

But there is another kind of walking which has to be learned. We hear a great deal about that in the Bible. S. Paul has much to say about how we ought to walk, and he was not writing to little tiny children, but to grown up men and women. In this very chapter from which my text comes, we read these words—"Be ye followers of God, as dear children, and walk in love see that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise redeeming the time." In another chapter S. Paul writes, "I beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called." In another place we read, "Let us walk honestly, as in the day." And again, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh." "As ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him."

Now there are only two roads on which we can walk. One is the broad road which leads to destruction, the devil's road. It seems easy to travel on it at first, but it grows harder and rougher as we go on, for "the way of transgressors is hard." You know what the other road is? The King's Highway, the narrow

path which leads to life eternal, God's Way, of which He says, "Walk ye in it." Very often this road is difficult to journey on, it is very steep and up hill sometimes, but there is always some one to help us, and there are the foot-marks of One who has gone before us, to show us the way. You know that we sing a hymn sometimes, in which are the words—

"O let me see Thy foot-prints,
And in them plant mine own."

Well, those are the foot-prints of Jesus Christ, aud He has gone before us along the path of holiness, and patience, and sorrow, to show us the way. Some of you children have no doubt heard of King Canute the Dane, who was King of England, and who rebuked his courtiers by bidding the waves obey him? One day, long ago, Canute was staying in a village among the fens, and he wished to cross over to the Isle of Ely. The weather was very cold, and the fens were all frozen, so that the only way to reach the Island was by sledge. But it was a very dangerous journey, for there were places where the ice was rotten, and would not bear the weight of a sledge, and in other places there were holes and deep pools. Whilst King Canute was doubting what was best to be done, a poor labourer, who had got the nickname of Bodge, because he was big and stout, came forward, and offered to go before the king's sledge, and find a safe track for him. So

they started on their journey, feeling quite safe, since if the ice would bear poor Bodge it would bear the sledge. When they reached Ely, the king found that the labourer was a slave, and he set him free, and gave him a great reward. When I read that story, I was reminded how the dear Lord Jesus has gone over the difficult road before us to lead the way to rest and peace. When the journey seems very hard, and it *is* very difficult sometimes for little children, and for men and women, to walk in the right way—then remember that Jesus has gone before, and that He can and will give you strength to walk in His holy ways. Here are some plain rules for you, my children, which will show you how you ought to walk through life as God's children, as children of light.

First of all, then, *keep to the right.* You will often see these words printed up in the crowded streets of great cities. Your own conscience will tell you what is right, and whenever there are two ways for you to go in, the right or the wrong, be sure to *keep to the right.*

The next rule I give you is, *keep your eyes open.* If you were to walk along a road with your eyes shut, you would soon stumble or fall, or wander out of the right path; but if you keep your eyes open, you see the rough places over which you might stumble, and the muddy places where you might splash your clothes

with dirt, and you can see the finger-post showing you the right way. Well, in walking along the path of life you will need to keep your eyes open. There are dangerous places, over which you will stumble and fall, unless you watch for them carefully; there are temptations, like muddy pools, which will stain your white robe, and make it foul, unless you avoid them. If you keep your eyes open, you will see God's Hand directing you, and you will find that He has placed many finger-posts to show you the right way. The Church is one finger-post, the Bible is another, your teachers are all pointing out to you the right road. If you were to journey along with your eyes shut, you might meet with bad company, with those who would rob you, and wound you. There is plenty of such bad company on the road of life. There are bad boys and girls who will try to lead you out of the right way, out of the King's highway, into some back lane of sin. They want to rob you, to take your good name from you, to strip off the dress which God gave you in Holy Baptism. Keep your eyes open, my children, and see well what sort of company you keep. And not only keep your eyes open, *but don't wear spectacles*. I don't mean actual spectacles, you may need them some day, when you grow older; what I mean is that some people see things quite wrongly, because they look at them through coloured spectacles. I know some people

who always seem gloomy and discontented. Nothing suits them. The weather is always wrong, they say the sun never shines, and the rain is always falling. Why is it? Because they are looking at everything through *dark spectacles*, and so everything seems dark to them. There are some boys and girls of this kind. At school they are generally grumbling. They complain that the food is bad, that the teachers are unkind, and that they themselves are very unlucky. It is just because they are looking at things through dark-coloured spectacles. You find them murmuring over their school-work. They never *can* read that hard book, they tell us, they never *can* master that difficult sum! It is all the fault of the dark spectacles. Sometimes we find children very quarrelsome, always saying unkind things to each other, and if we ask them the reason, they tell us that some one is so cross, or so unkind, but the fault is in themselves. They have been looking at a companion's face through black spectacles. Some children look at things through *magnifying* glasses. Every little fault in a companion is magnified, till it looks quite big and terrible. When they come to look at themselves, they magnify their own goodness, and they think they are wonderfully clever, pleasant, amiable people. My children, don't look through these glasses.

My next piece of advice to you is, *push your way*. There are sure to be difficulties in your path. You can

do one of two things, you can wait for the difficulty to be removed, or you can push your way through it. In large towns, where there are great public buildings, such as banks and offices, you often see a heavy door leading into the building, and on it is written the one word, *push*. Now, suppose you wished to enter that building; you might *pull* at that door for hours and not open it; you might ring the bell, or call to someone to open, but everybody would be too busy to listen. There would be only one thing for you to do, you must *push*, then the door would open. So it is with all difficulties, "where there's a will there's a way," if you push against the door which is blocking your way, it will open.

There was a famous painter at Antwerp long ago, called Quintin Matsys. He was a blacksmith at first, and this is how he became a painter. He fell in love with a young woman, but her father refused to let her marry the blacksmith unless he painted a great picture. Now here was a great difficulty in the way. Quintin Matsys knew something about painting, but much more about a blacksmith's anvil. He did not give up his purpose, however; he studied and painted early and late, and in six months he produced his famous picture, *The Misers*, and won his wife. On his own portrait he wrote the words, "Love made me a painter." If you want to succeed in anything, my children, you must push.

If you want to be good children, to walk as children of light, you must push your way through the temptations and difficulties of life. Remember there is always another hand helping you. God helps those who help themselves. God expects us to do something for ourselves. When He sent the quails to the Children of Israel in the wilderness, they had to prepare and cook them. When He rained down manna for them to eat, they had to go out and gather it.

Take another word of advice, when you meet with your enemy, *fight.* I don't mean an earthly enemy, and I don't mean fighting with your fists. As you walk along the roads of life, your enemy, the devil, will often stand in the path to injure you, to turn you out of the way, "Whom resist, steadfast in the faith. The ancient Greeks, who were the most famous soldiers of old times, carried a shield in battle. To lose this shield and leave it behind, was the greatest disgrace which could happen to them. When a soldier was killed, or badly wounded, his companions laid him on his shield, and carried him out of the fight. I have read of a Greek mother, who said to her son as he was going to the battle, "Either return *with* your shield or *upon* it." That meant, "Either conquer or die." My children, it would be very sad for us to have to say, after we have met with temptations to sin—"I have returned again, *but I have left my shield behind.*"

Last of all, take this rule if you would walk rightly, *mind the crossings.* In London streets it is very difficult and dangerous to cross the road sometimes. If you are not very careful, and quite accustomed to it, you may be knocked down, and run over: or you may take the wrong turning. and lose yourself. So it is with life, we have to cross over a difficult crossing very often, and there is a great crowd of temptations and sins all around us, and if we are not very watchful, we shall be knocked down and run over by some of these temptations. I have known many boys and girls who were once pure, happy children, who lost their good name, and their happy looks, because they did *not mind the crossings.* They came to *Purity crossing*, and they were careless, and evil lust came upon them, and they were run over, and cruelly wounded. They came to *Honesty crossing*, and they were not on their guard, and they were run over by a temptation to steal, and so they were ruined. When they passed over *Truthful crossing*, they were not watching, and *Falsehood* came upon them, and overthrew them, and whilst they were trying to escape from the consequences of this, they took the wrong turning, and have never been in the right road since. My children, be careful how you walk, keep your eyes open, and ask God for help *every day*—"Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise;" "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

SERMON XIV.

A BUNCH OF FLOWERS.

1 SAMUEL XXV. 29.

"Bound in the bundle of life with the Lord thy God."

My children, let us say the Creed together, slowly and carefully. When we publicly say that we believe these great and solemn truths, we should not do so hurriedly or thoughtlessly. Now I want you to think specially about some words in the end of the Creed—"I believe in the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints." I will try to explain to you what those words mean. You have all seen a bunch of flowers tied together into a nosegay. You can see such flowers on the Altar now; you often bring a bunch of flowers to

school, and give it to the master, to make his desk look bright. Well, try to think you are looking at a bunch of flowers now. What strikes you first? That all the flowers are different from each other. They are unlike in colour, in shape, in size, and in scent. Some are red, some blue, some white, some yellow. Some flowers are shaped like stars, others like a bell. Some are much prettier and sweeter than others. You children are like those flowers, so are we all. We are all unlike each other. No two people are exactly the same in appearance or character. Some of you children are handsomer than others, some are more clever, some are stronger than their companions. Some of you have more sweetness of temper than others. Some of you girls are very handy with your needle, others of you are quick at arithmetic or geography. Just as every flower has its place and its work in God's world, so has every child. The fern growing up in the lowly corner does not say, "If I were an oak I might do some good." A daisy doesn't say, "If I were a rose, I would do something." Each does his work in his appointed place. If you look at the bunch of flowers again, you will see that in some things the flowers are all alike. They all *begin alike.* They spring out of the ground, and God's sunshine gives them colour and beauty, and God's rain refreshes them, and makes them grow.

It is the same with us. We all begin alike. God

makes us all, and the Holy Spirit is like the sunshine, giving us the beauty of holiness: and like the rain, washing us, and purifying us, and making us grow in grace.

And the flowers all end alike. They all wither and die, and from them comes new life. So it is with us. We all must die, and we all must rise again in the new life of the resurrection.

And these different flowers are all bound together and centred in one bunch. Now you will see what this has to do with the Church of Christ. The Catholic, or Universal, Church, is called the Communion of Saints, that's very much the same as if we called it a bunch of flowers. In the Church there are all sorts of different people, just as there are all sorts of different children among you. There are rich and poor, high and low, clever and dull, strong and weak. But all who *are* God's people form *one* body, just as the different flowers form *one* bunch. All those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, all who try to do His will, and keep His commandments, no matter whether they be old people or little children, no matter whether they be high or lowly, form one bunch of sweet flowers, the Communion of Saints. What is it which binds the bunch of flowers together? One piece of cord. What is the cord which binds all the Saints of

God together? The love of Jesus, which makes them love one another. People are often mistaken about the meaning of the word *Saint*. They think the Saints are a small class of people, different from everyone else. My children, all God's people are called to be Saints. Jesus says, "Be ye holy, for I am holy," and being a Saint only means being holy. When we speak of *Saint* John, we merely mean, *holy* John. Being a member of the Holy Catholic Church, trying to lead a holy life, means belonging to the Communion of Saints. But the Communion of Saints means more than this. Many holy men, and women, and little children, have passed away from this earth. We say they are dead, but rather we ought to say they are living. God is taking care of them in Paradise:—

"O happy Saints! For ever blest,
At Jesus' feet how safe your rest."

Do you remember that beautiful hymn which we sing at Harvest Thanksgiving, and which tells us that—

"Within an hallowed acre
He sows yet other grain,
When peaceful earth receiveth
The dead He died to gain;
For though the growth be hidden,
We know that they shall rise,
Yea even now they ripen
In sunny Paradise."

Yes, the flowers which seem to have dropped from the nosegay are not lost, they are growing, ripening, in sunny Paradise. When your little brother died, after being so patient, and tender, and loving, through all his illness, do you think he was lost to you? Do you think he forgets you? Oh, no! That little flower still forms one of God's great bundle of sweet Saints, and he loves you, and cares for you, and prays for you now just as of old, he is your brother still, and you are all one family, "bound in the bundle of life with the Lord your God." Your mother, who was laid to rest in the churchyard, has not forgotten her darling. She taught you to pray, she first showed you how to clasp your little hands, and to say, "Our Father," and she is praying for you, and watching you as you grow up day by day. So you see the Church of Christ in earth, and the Church of Christ in Paradise, is all one, one bunch of sweet flowers, the Communion of Saints. The bunch of flowers which you placed on the master's table has one common *home*, the flowers, though many and different, all have one place, the vase in which they are put. So you, my children, though many, are one body, and you have one home, the Church. The flowers in the nosegay have all the same *work* to do, to adorn and beautify and sweeten the teacher's room. The different flowers do this in different ways. One flower lights up the room with its bright colour, another

has no colour, but its white flowers give a delicious scent. Some blossoms stand out grandly, like the rose, or flash red and dazzling, like the geranium : others are lowly, but very sweet, like the violet or the lily of the valley, but you see they all work together to do one thing, to make beauty and sweetness.

You, children, as members of the Church, which is the Communion of Saints, have a common work, to make your lives beautiful and fragrant with the beauty of holiness, that you may present them to God. You cannot all work in the same way; just as the flowers in the nosegay are all different, yet all combine to do the same thing, to beautify the teacher's room ; so you in your different ways can do your part to beautify your Heavenly Teacher's House. His Church on earth can be made sweet and fair by your lives, if you are good children, and when your work is done here, you will join the saints in Paradise, and beautify the Heavenly House of God your Teacher, still one body, one united family, one sweet bunch of flowers, "bound in the bundle of life with the Lord your God."

SERMON XV.

SMALL THINGS.

ZECH. IV. 10.

"Who hath despised the day of small things?"

You, my children, are living in the day of small things, the day of little sorrows, and little joys, and little sins, and little words and thoughts; but do not despise the day of small things. The greatest results, both of good and evil, come from small beginnings. There is an old fable that the trees of the forest once held a meeting, to complain of the injuries which the woodman's axe had done to them. All the trees determined that none of them would give any wood to make a handle for their enemy the axe. The axe went travelling up

and down the forest, begging the oak, and the elm, the cedar and the ash, to give him wood enough for a handle, but they refused. At last the axe begged for just enough wood, only a little bit, to enable him to cut down the brambles, which were choking the roots of the trees. Well, they agreed to this, and gave him a little wood, but no sooner had the axe got a handle than the cedar and the oak, the ash and the elm, and all the trees were cut down. So it is with sins and bad habits. They begin with a very small beginning, the Tempter whispers, "Is it not a little one?" and then, if you yield to them, they cut you down and destroy you.

A number of people were once assembled in a grand park, and the owner of it pointed to a magnificent sycamore tree, which was dead and decayed to the core. "That tree," said he, "was killed by a single worm." Two years before it was as healthy as any other tree in the park, but one day a worm, of about three inches long, was seen to be forcing its way under the bark. A naturalist who saw it, told the owner that if left alone it would kill the tree. The master of the park scarcely believed it possible, but next summer the leaves of the sycamore fell very early, and on the following year it was a dead, rotten thing. One worm can kill a whole tree, one sin or evil habit persisted in can ruin a child for whom Christ died.

You have all read about the great fire of London, in King Charles the Second's time. Nearly all the houses and churches in London, even S. Paul's Cathedral, were destroyed; and all that terrible loss arose from one fire in a baker's shop. My children, never think a sin is a trifle, it may seem small to you, but it is none the less dangerous. A scorpion is a very small reptile, but it can sting a lion to death. There are plenty of criminals in our prisons and reformatories now who began by stealing a postage stamp or telling a lie. There are plenty of ruined men and women, who began as children by being too idle to get up betimes in the morning, and to do their work.

My children, if you want to get rid of the weeds in your garden, pull them up when they are young, don't give them time to grow strong, and run to seed. So if you want to grow up to be good men and women, try to get the better of bad habits whilst you are young. I have sometimes spoken to you about Hercules. One of the stories about him is that he had to perform some very hard, almost impossible, labours. One was to clean out the stable of King Augeas, which had never been cleansed in the memory of man. Hercules performed this task by turning aside a river out of its course, and carrying it through the stable. Now, my children, we have all got some cleansing work to be done every day. If we do not watch over our lives,

and our tempers, and our words every day, they will become as foul as the Augean stable. Every day we must examine ourselves, we must ask, what wrong thing have I done, or said, or thought to-day, then we must ask God, for Jesus Christ's sake, to pardon us, and to help us to keep our lives clean for the future. If we put off this, we shall find our life as hard to clean as Hercules found the Augean Stable.

Another of the labours of Hercules was to kill the Hydra, a horrible monster with one hundred heads. As fast as one head was cut off, two more grew in its place, unless the wound was stopped with fire. We have all got some kind of a monster like the Hydra to fight with. Perhaps your monster is Bad Temper, perhaps yours is Laziness, and yours Untruthfulness. Children, you must fight against the monster, and cut off its heads. If laziness is your monster, make up your mind, and to-morrow morning jump out of bed at once, when the proper time comes, without waiting: that's cutting off the monster's head. But you will find that if you only do this, two heads will grow where you cut off one. To-morrow you will get up in time, but the next morning the temptation to be lazy will be stronger than ever. What must you do? Why, when you have fought with your monster, your temptation, and cut off a head, you must get the wound burnt with fire, that the heads may not grow again. I mean

you must pray to God to help you, and to send the fire of the Holy Spirit to your assistance.

Now let us go on again to think of the importance of little things. In the picture shops in London just now, there is a photograph of a book with some of the leaves cut and torn. What do you think that picture represents? A New Testament, which a soldier had in his bosom in one of the Egyptian battles, and the bullet which would have killed him, struck the Book instead.

Some years ago, a ship was wrecked off the Sussex coast. All on board were lost, except four sailors, and they were cast on the rocks; but as the sea was rapidly rising, they had no hope, for they felt that the tide would gradually cover them, and they must perish by a lingering death. Suddenly one of the men took hold of a plant upon the rock to steady himself, the leaves gave way in his hand, and he saw that the plant was the Samphire, and he remembered that it never grows under water. So such a little thing as a handful of leaves on a rock brought comfort to those shipwrecked men, for they knew the waters would not cover them.

Remember what I said about little sins. They seem like trifles to us. Well, a grain of sand seems a very little thing too, yet millions of grains form the desert,

and bury the traveller beneath them. When we do wrong for the sake of pleasing ourselves, we think it a small matter, and look forward to having our own way. But we find in time that what we get by our sin crushes us at last. I will tell you a story about that. In the early days of Rome, the Governor of the Citadel, the strongest part of the town, had a daughter called Tarpeia. When the Sabines, a neighbouring tribe, came to attack Rome, Tarpeia promised to open the gates to the enemies of her people. As a reward she asked for what the Sabines carried on their left hands, meaning their golden bracelets. When the treacherous woman had let them in, the king of the Sabines not only threw his bracelet upon Tarpeia, but his heavy shield, which was also carried on the left hand. His followers did the same, and Tarpeia was crushed beneath the shields and bracelets. So it is with sin, "the wages of sin is death."

Again, *little words* seem mere trifles, but they are very important. Such words as "I shan't," "I won't," "I don't care," have made many a parent's heart sad, and spoilt many a promising life. I will tell you a very terrible story about those words, "I don't care." A young man once made a bet with some of his companions, that he would go to a priest, and confess his sins in sport, and tell his friends all that happened. The bet was accepted. The young man went to the

priest, and tried to treat the whole matter as a joke, saying he had only come to win a bet. So he confessed his sins, saying after each, "But I don't care for that." When he had finished, the priest told him that he must do penance, and this is what he set him to do. Every day, at morning, noon, and night, he was to say these words three times—"I know that I must die, *but I don't care for that;* I know I must be judged, *but I don't care for that;* I know there is a Hell for sinners, *but I don't care for that.*" When the young man told his companions, they insisted that he should undergo his penance. He accordingly repeated the words at the stated time, carelessly at first; but the oftener he said them the more terrible they seemed; and he returned to the priest in real sorrow and repentance.

I saw two little words put up in the window of the post-office the other day, they were these—*Too late.* If I had wanted to send a letter that night, no matter how important, I could not have done so. Dear children, don't neglect repentance *now*, don't put off doing your duty *now*, or the day will come when you must say those words—*Too late.*

SERMON XVI.

THE BRIGHT BROTHERHOOD.

PSALM XXXIV. 7.

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."

THERE is a picture which some of you may have seen. It represents a little child, dressed as a pilgrim, walking along a narrow path. On either side of the path is a steep, dangerous precipice, the edges of which are hidden by fair flowers and fruit. Behind the child is an angel, whose face is full of anxiety for the little one, and who rests its hands upon the child's shoulders, to keep him in the middle of the path. That picture is not a mere fancy. Every child of God has a guardian Angel, who watches over him, and helps him on life's

journey. Can you remember any words about this in the Psalms? "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee, and in their hands shall they bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone."

As soon as you were baptised, my children, God sent an holy angel, one of the bright Brotherhood on high, to be your guardian and guide. There is a great army of bright angels all around us, although we cannot see them. Do you remember how the prophet Elisha went with his servant to Dothan, and how the king of Syria surrounded the city with chariots and horsemen, to take them prisoner? And when the prophet's servant was frightened at the sight, God opened his eyes to see that the mountain was filled with angels sent to protect them. Well, my children, there is a great host of angels encamped round those who fear the Lord. You know that we cannot see the stars in the bright sunshine of day, but they are there all the same. And this Church is filled with bright angels, and the highways of our cities, and the schoolroom where you do your lessons, all have their angel visitors, although we cannot see them.

When our soldiers were in Egypt the other day, they marched by night to take Tel-el-Kebir. In perfect silence and thick darkness, over an unknown way, the troops moved forward. And we are told that many of

them felt depressed and sad on that night march, far away from home, in a strange land. But there was something to comfort them. We are told that they looked up to the sky, and saw the stars shining down on them, the same stars which shone at home, and they found companionship and comfort in them.

I think, my children, we shall find the same, if we remember that the eyes of the bright angels are watching us, and looking down lovingly upon us. These holy angels are our high-born brothers, for God made us a "little lower than the angels;" they are God's great army, who do His will, and go to and fro between Heaven and earth. Can you tell me of anyone mentioned in the Bible who saw the angels going up and down between earth and Heaven? Jacob, when he saw that wonderful vision at Bethel. Let us think of some of the different kinds of work which angels do for us. They take care of us in times of danger. You remember how Daniel refused to give up prayer, and was cast into a den of lions. Now it would seem that nothing could have saved Daniel from death. But we read that when the king came to the lions' den, he found Daniel alive and unhurt, and he told him that his God had sent His angel and shut the mouths of the lions. Dear children, if you will only be brave as Daniel was, and let nothing keep you back from praying, and doing what is right, the same God who saved

Daniel will send His angel to take care of you. We read in the Bible of a certain poor mother, who was wandering in the sandy, burning desert with her child. They had no water to drink, and the child was almost dead with thirst. Do you remember who they were? Hagar and Ishmael. Yes, and God "heard the voice of the lad" when he cried out, and God sent his angel, and showed poor fainting Hagar a well of water. Can you tell me of some one who was in great danger, because he lived in a wicked city? Yes, Lot, who was dwelling in Sodom, and God's angels came and hurried him away. Now think of some one who was put into prison for Christ's sake. He was sleeping between two soldiers in the inner prison, and his wrists were chained to the wrists of the soldiers, so that it was impossible for him to escape. Who was it? S. Peter. Suddenly a light shone in the prison, and the angel of the Lord came and raised up S. Peter, and his chains fell off, and the angel took him safely out of prison. Do you know any special reason why the angel came to deliver S. Peter? Because he was a good man? Yes, that was one reason, but I read in the Acts of the Apostles that whilst S. Peter was in prison "prayer was made without ceasing of the Church unto God for Him." I think that was the chief reason why the angel was sent. When our Saviour Jesus was in the Garden of Gethsemane, and His agony was so terrible that the bloody

sweat dropped from His Brow, who came to strengthen Him? An angel.

When you go home to-day, children, take your Bibles and try to find out as many places as you can where we are told about angels and their work. We know that God's angels fight for us. The devil and his angels are always making war with us, trying to force us to sin. When you got into a passion yesterday, that was because an evil angel was fighting with you. Just as the holy angels are all around us, watching over us, and helping us, so a cloud of dark angels, the devil's servants, are watching us, laying traps for us, putting temptations in our way, struggling with us. We must fight against them, and the angels of God will fight on our side. I told you that the holy angels are constantly going to and fro between Heaven and earth, between God and man. They are God's messengers, and they take our words to Him, and bring back His message of comfort to us. When we pray earnestly the angels take that prayer to God. A little child's whispered prayer seems a very small matter in the great busy world. But there is an angel waiting to bear it to the throne of God. When we have done wrong, and are truly sorry, and when we kneel and confess our sin to God, an angel takes the message to Heaven, and there is joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

But the angels have another kind of work. As they guard and keep the good, so they punish the wicked. An angel with a flaming sword kept Adam and Eve from returning to Paradise, after they had sinned. The angel of the Lord smote the Army of Assyria, and in the morning they were all dead corpses. It was an angel who brought the pestilence upon Jerusalem for David's sin. Long after the Bible days, in the sixth century, the city of Rome was visited by a terrible plague, like that which came on Jerusalem. S. Gregory, who was afterwards Pope, caused the clergy and people to walk solemnly for three days through the streets, chanting sad Litanies of penitence. It is said that on the third day, as the procession stood before the Mole of Hadrian, Gregory saw in a vision the Archangel Michael alight on the top of that great monument of Hadrian, and sheathe his sword. Then he knew that the pestilence was ended, and ever since the Mole of Hadrian has been called the castle of *Sant' Angelo*, that is, of the Holy Angel.

But last of all, my children, when God's people die the holy angels carry their spirits to Paradise. The Gospel tells us that very plainly. When Lazarus the beggar died, "He was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom," that is, to the rest and peace of Paradise, where faithful Abraham is rewarded for his faithfulness.

I saw a picture the other day which is very sad, yet very beautiful. It represents the Roman arena, or amphitheatre, in the days when the Christians were thrown to the wild beasts. It is the evening after one of these cruel scenes. On the dark, blood-stained sand lie the mangled bodies of the martyrs, some of them little children like you. But in the air above is a cloud of bright angels, who are bearing away the souls of the Christians to Jesus in Paradise. Don't you wish that you could see the bright angels now, my children? Well, perhaps if we led more strict and holy lives we might do so. Some people have seen angels in these days. I will tell you of two children who did so quite lately. The clergyman, who knew the children, tells us he is quite sure the story is true. A poor woman in a country village had one child, a boy of three years old, whom she loved dearly. One day, whilst she was absent from the cottage, the child fell into the fire, and was badly burned, that he died in a few hours. The poor mother was kneeling by the little one's bed a short time before he died, quite overcome with grief, when the child said, "Mother, don't you see the beautiful man, who is standing there waiting for me?" Again and again the child repeated that the beautifnl man was waiting for him, and he seemed quite ready to go. So the poor mother found comfort, because she knew that God had sent his angel to carry her darling home.

The same clergyman tells us, that a little boy of ten was lying on his deathbed. His parents watched almost constantly beside him, and his mother found it almost impossible to say, "God's will be done," and that made her sorrow all the more bitter. Suddenly, one night, the boy's parents saw a beautiful gleam of light over the head of the sleeping boy; as they watched it in astonishment, the light grew larger and brighter, and the most lovely colours, clearer than those of the most glorious rainbow, went and came. As the light faded the boy awoke, and joyfully told his parents that the Lord Jesus had come to him with two beautiful angels, and had told him that he would not die until that day week. They bid him also cheer his mother with the tidings that her child was going to be with Jesus. That day week the boy died full of happy joy, and the bright vision which had come to them cheered the parents in their sorrow.

Dear children, may the Lord Jesus bless and keep you, and ever send his angels to watch about your path and about your bed—

> "Still let them succour us, still let them fight,
> Lord of Angelic hosts, battling for right!
> Till, where their anthems they ceaselessly pour,
> We with the angels may love and adore."

THE END.

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